

WORLD'S #1 PLAYSTATION 2 MAG

PS2'S 10
SCARIEST GAMES

PSM

100% INDEPENDENT
STATION 2

PS2'S **BEST LINEUP EVER!**

FALL GAME PREVIEW

13-PAGE
**SPECIAL
FEATURE!**

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PRINCE OF PERSIA 2
MIDNIGHT CLUB III
GOLDENEYE 2
**& MANY
MORE!**

PS3
WHEN
YOU'LL
GET TO
SEE IT!

grand
theft
auto
San Andreas



**FIRST LOOK! CRIME
in the COUNTRY!**

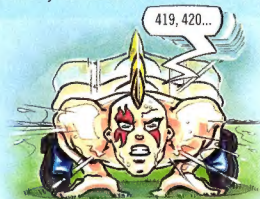
FIRST REVIEW!
**STAR WARS
BATTLEFRONT**



HOT SHOTS TIPS 1

PuttCrusher04 on the Short Game

There are two places I like to blow off steam. One is the wrestling ring, where I see how high I can throw other wrestlers. The other is the putting green. A good putt depends on a proper grip. I grip the putter firmly, but just loose enough so I don't shatter it with my bare hands.



When it comes to putting, mental preparation is key. For me, bench-pressing a golf cart and a couple hundred push-ups usually do the trick.



While standing with your feet neck-width apart, bend over until you can see the ball past your pectorals.



The cast of golfers is crazier. The golf physics are sweeter. And the chance to out-birdie other players online is finally here. Play real-time tournaments online with up to 30 players, or go head-to-head, chatting it up during each round.

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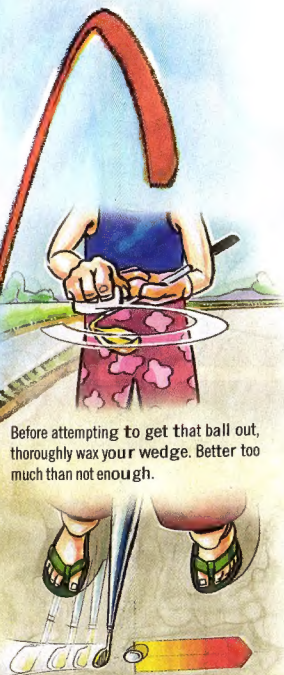
www.us.playstation.com

Online play requires Internet connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (RMB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). Hot Shots Golf marks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "Live In Your World. Play In Ours" and the Online icon are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.

2

BunkerBreaker007 on Getting Out of the Sand

People always ask how I learned to conquer these mighty sand traps. I don't know. That's like asking how gale-force winds learn to blow just as a dude's ready to tee off. All I do know is that ever since I was a kid, I liked surfing near sand, sitting on sand, even eating sand. But that was on a dare.



Before attempting to get that ball out, thoroughly wax your wedge. Better too much than not enough.

Swing under the ball and lift it out of the sand. Then do a thorough toe check for any signs of sand jam.

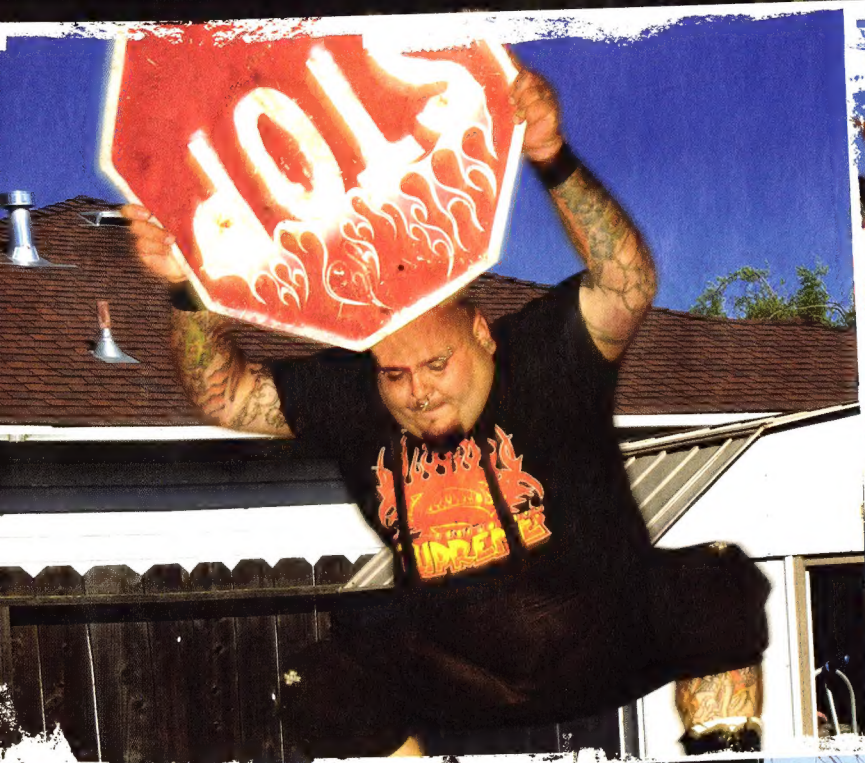


PlayStation.2



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

"Clear off the table, because BYW2 will be busting through it..." - GameSpy



"This makes the WWE look like ballroom dancing" - TeamXbox

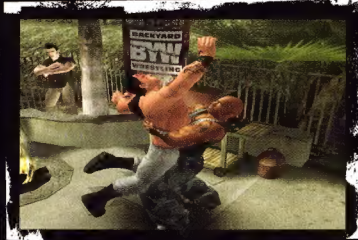
Customizable Soundtrack features music from: Hoobastank, Insane Clown Posse, Saliva, Kool Keith, Mudvayne, Midtown, Dizzee Rascal, Andrew WK, and tons more!

BACKYARD WRESTLING 2

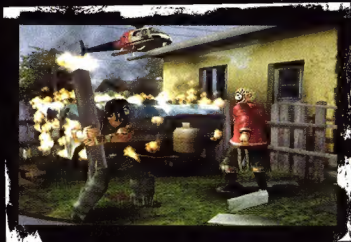
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All new grappling system now includes submission holds, body part specific damage, and a defense system.



The most insane arsenal of weapons ever includes weed wackers, deep fryers, chain saws, tables, chairs and fire.



Take the fight to offices, restaurants, mini-golf courses, carnivals and of course... the backyard.

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PlayStation 2

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Fall brings top games and... a new PSM?!

Penniless, but with a smile — that's how you'll be after PS2's triple-A fall lineup ransacks your ATM card. *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Devil May Cry 3*, *Jak 3*, *Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal*... the list goes on for, like, twenty pages. With Sony set to turn its attention towards PSP early next year and PS3 shortly thereafter, the PS2 will almost certainly never see a lineup as awe-inspiring as this again. It's

fitting, then, that nearly every major PS2 franchise has a sequel hitting over the next few months — their final PS2 appearance, for most of these big-name series.

It's with these changing times in mind that we're planning some major changes of our own next month. We're challenging ourselves to go beyond anything we — or anyone — has ever done with a gaming magazine. We're calling it *PSM Reloaded*, and it happens in just 30 days. See you there. — **CHRIS SLATE**



CHRIS SLATE
Editor-in-Chief

LIKES: Action/adventure games, platformers, arcade racers, wacky stuff, *The Ultimates*

HOBBIES: Comics, hoops, DVDs, movies, anime, drawing, iPod

Give us your own personal Fall Preview... I plan to lose myself in *Jolly Ranchers* and *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* for about two straight weeks. After that, a third week of nothing but showering and mouthwash.

MEET THE TEAM

Ever wonder what a crack team of videogame journalists looks like? ...Aw, c'mon folks, just work with us a little, here...



RANDY NELSON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

LIKES: Action, shooters, racers
HOBBIES: Toys, comics, anime

Give us your own Fall Preview... Fall is the perfect time to mindlessly worship Oingo Boingo. They rock!



BILL DONOHUE
MANAGING EDITOR

LIKES: polish-pope.com
HOBBIES: Playing loud music

Give us your own Fall Preview... I'd have to say pro football, followed by more football and maybe a visit to Rochester.



ERIC BRATCHER
SENIOR EDITOR

LIKES: RPGs, Weird Imports
HOBBIES: Taming my yard

Give us your own Fall Preview... I see the days getting shorter and the nights colder, plus Godzilla will attack Tokyo.



DAN FITZPATRICK
ART DIRECTOR

LIKES: Playing music
HOBBIES: Learning guitar

Give us your own Fall Preview... Bright, new colors are in the house, just as soon as I get done washing and scraping...



Kaiser Hwang
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LIKES: FPSs, Franz Ferdinand
HOBBIES: Loving my ex-cat

Give us your own Fall Preview... All the leaves are brown, and the sky is gray... Oops! Sorry... I didn't know you were there.



GARY LIEW
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

LIKES: Autumn
HOBBIES: Leaf-blowing

Give us your own Fall Preview... I am betting that many leaves will hit the ground, but I know my rake is ready!

ON THE COVER | WELCOME TO OUR FIRST ANNUAL FALL GAMES PREVIEW! THE year's biggest games are just about here, and if you'll flip to our feature, we'll tell you what you need to know about every one. Prep up for PS2's last big year before the PS3 hype begins!





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DECEPTION



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GAME OF E3"



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GAME OF E3"

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OCTOBER 2004

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PlayStation 2



MD MIDWAY



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FALL GAME PREVIEW

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There's a huge avalanche of games heading our way in the next couple of months... our intensive coverage starts on page 54!

<< THIS IS THE STRONGEST
HOLIDAY LINEUP PS2
OWNERS HAVE HAD >>

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**PSM'S
SCARIEST GAMES!**

And now the screaming starts...

3cm8mm

72

KATAMARI DAMACY

Just possibly the strangest game you've ever played!

FEATURED PREVIEWS

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CALL OF DUTY: FH

Somebody greased the monkey bars just before the new kid climbed on.

76



NEO CONTRA

Yes, it's true... some cockroaches can live without their heads for more than a week!

80



DEF JAM: FFNY

"Yeah, you stepped in it. You got to take your shoes off on the porch, Stinky."

81



GODZILLA: STE

That night was painful, but they learned their lesson. They never drank tequila again.

Ghosthunter™

IT'S A
LIVING HELL
MINUS THE LIVING

A routine disturbance call. A startling discovery. A catastrophe of supernatural proportions.

Now, trusting only in his paranormal abilities and a phenomenal array of weapons, Lazarus Jones is out to capture hordes of tortured souls who seek vengeance on the world of the living.

"Brilliant in every way!"
- play magazine

PlayStation 2



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The world's most accurate, in-depth game reviews

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VIEWTIFUL JOE

Glorious 2D madness!

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Your first look at the hottest new PlayStation 2 games

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<< HOW EXACTLY DO YOU GO ABOUT IMPROVING ON WHAT'S ALREADY THE END-ALL STREET HOOPS GAME? >> pg. 12



VIEWTIFUL JOE

It started out on the Gamecube, and now it's making its way to the PS2. Capcom's Clover Studio didn't stop there, though. They added a special playable character just for us. Find out who it is on page 22!

PSM
GAME
OF THE
MONTH

FEATURED REVIEWS



▲ STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT "No! I said right! Turn right! AAAAH!"



▲ SILENT HILL 4 She liked playing "French Fry"... he brought catsup.



▲ DOG'S LIFE "No, sorry... I don't know the Love Theme from Benji!"



▲ ASTRO BOY Mean kids would often set Randy's shoes on fire.

THE PSM MISSION STATEMENT

PSM is the magazine for the gaming elite — the hardcore gamers that support and drive this industry. This is not a "mass-market" magazine. We don't focus on "fun for the whole family," or waste space interviewing movie stars that have nothing to do with games. That's just not what we're into.

PSM is also proudly independent. We have no official corporate sponsor, so you can trust that our reviews and opinions will always be 100% our own. Our readers always come first, and we would never, ever betray your trust. This is our promise to you, the hardcore PlayStation 2 gamer, who deserves nothing less. Now let's get this issue going!



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All three classic films, *Star Wars: A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi*, digitally restored and remastered, with all-new 5.1 Surround EX for the best possible picture and sound quality. Plus, a bonus disc with more than four hours of special features including the most comprehensive documentary ever produced on the *Star Wars* saga, featuring never-before-seen footage and featurettes.

COMING 9.21.04

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PlayStation 2



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▶ Show us how you dribble!

▼ The Cav's LeBron James... he's in the game.



▲ Tracy McGrady goes for the dunk and... and... find out next month!

GAME-BREAKING-NEWS!

HOOP DREAM

NBA Street V3 is on the way... and online!

Just before this issue went to press, Electronic Arts made the not-so-unexpected announcement that it's making a third game in the *NBA Street* series — but how exactly do you go about improving on what's already the end-all street hoops game, *NBA Street Vol. 2*?

"We're excited to continue to push the possibilities of customization, self-expression, and creativity in the new school revolution of hoops," says Wil Mozell, the game's senior producer. By customization, Mozell means two things: a much greater degree of control over how your custom baller looks and moves, and the very cool sounding design-a-court mode — yep, you'll be able to create your own courts... and challenge other players to games on them online.

Online play is the third biggest addition to the series revealed so far, and, combined with the ability to create and share your own courts, should

be absolutely awesome. EA Canada, the game's developer (and the crew behind the first two *NBA Street* titles) isn't revealing anything about online play modes, tournaments, and the like, but looking at recent releases such as *NCAA Football 2005* and this year's *Madden*, we should probably expect great things.

Rounded out by a new slam dunk contest mode, *NBA Street V3* is slated to hit the court next spring. We'll have much more on the game soon!



▲ The NBA's best are present and accounted for, but you'll be able to mold your own b-ball superstar, not to mention design your own courts.



FIRST INFO

NFL STREET 2

The pull-no-punches pigskin champ is back!

NBA Street V3 isn't the only street sports sequel on the way from EA. Also announced, but much more hush-hush at the moment is *NFL Street 2*, a follow-up to last year's fun and furious, fast and loose take on American football developed by EA Tiburon.

NFL Street 2 will be handled by the same team in the run-up to its 2005 release, and is already pegged to include an expanded array of wall moves and online play modes.

STILL A MENACE!

HERE COMES THE SPIDER-MAN (AGAIN)

Another Spidey 2 movie game? Not quite...

The next Spider-Man movie isn't going to be out for a long time. So, how do you fill the videogame gap in the meantime? Activision's answer to that question will come in the form of *Ultimate Spider-Man*, a game based on the best-selling comic book of the same name.

Written by renowned scribe Brian Michael Bendis, the comic book presents a retelling of the web-slinger's origin, his high school life, and his relationships with other classic Spidey universe characters, such as Mary Jane Watson and Gwen Stacy. Whether or not Bendis — or Treyarch, developer of the swing-tastic *Spider-Man 2* game — will be involved in this new title has yet to be revealed. If the swinging's as fun as *Spidey 2*, the visuals look like the comic, and there's more variety to the missions, we'll be all about it!

► Spider-Man: still a menace!



NEW DETAILS

REVENGE OF THE SITH

The most ambitious Star Wars game yet?

Set to tie in with *Episode III* — it will release on May 5, 2005, two weeks before the film hits theaters — *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith* is already being touted by those who've seen it in action as possibly the best *Star Wars* action game yet.

The game will focus heavily on lightsaber combat, casting players as Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi — there's even talk that we'll get to play as Ani after he's been burnt to a crisp and reborn as Darth Vader, complete with a much cooler, whine-free voice! Keep those fingers crossed.

With the stunt choreographer from the film onboard to ensure phenomenal, Force-fueled action, we may finally be able to forgive and forget *Masters of Teräs Käsi*. Just maybe. In any event, look for more details as the *Sith*'s revenge draws nearer.



EA just bought Criterion, maker of *Burnout 3: Takedown* and *RenderWare*, the middleware / game engine used by an enormous number of PlayStation 2 games.

Another super-team joins the massive EA fold, but, more importantly, EA just bought itself a way to be financially involved (in the receiving money sense) with a whole lot of the games you'll be playing on PlayStation 3. That, and it also got its nits on *Black*, a highly-secret, but already very highly-regarded PS2 first-person shooter due out next year. Who's next on EA's shopping list?



THE NEWS: Midway will be publishing the next three Unreal universe games, starting with *Unreal Championship 2* on Xbox.

THE VIEW: Don't be surprised if this move on Midway's part sees *Unreal Championship 2* head to PS2 in some form — we're already starting to hear whispers on that front. Other than that, it means that the company behind the very good *NBA Ballers* and *Ps-Ops* has three more potential hits on its hands, not to mention engine technology that will lead to some amazing looking PS3 games.

THE NEWS: Top Cow is planning a new *Jonah Raider* comic to coincide with the next *Jonah Raider* game.

A couple of reasons: First off, Top Cow will be releasing its 19 comic to the best of 2004, giving it the first major milestone when to expect future adaptations on PS2. Secondly, the current *78* comic is already wrapping up because the same 68 games will feature a new *Jonah Raider* comic series. Although to warrant a revision of the comic line, combine this with the fact that Crystal Dynamics and the *Jonah Raider* team are planning a new and more excitement level grows.

THE NEWS: *Battlefield: Modern Combat* is getting an offline, single-player mode. It's also being delayed 'til next year.

THE VIEW: We have to give EA credit for realizing that releasing an online-only game for PS2 at this point would be a very risky endeavor indeed. The game was already looking great, but the number of online PS2 owners versus those who aren't would have meant limited exposure for such a promising game. Just imagine if *SOCOM* had been online-only. Sure, lots of people play it online, but it's primarily a solid offline, squad-based action game. Hopefully, *BMC* will prove to be worth the wait.

PSNEXT

The #1 source for PSP and PS3 news, views, and more!

PS3 WILL ROCK NEXT E3!

It's on! Sony reveals when the world will meet the next PlayStation

Imagine this: you're sitting at a boring financial briefing, listening to Ken Kutaragi, creator of the PlayStation, rattle off a bunch of numbers showing how well the company is doing. Then, out of nowhere, he says "Oh, and by the way, we're going to unveil the next PlayStation before next April in Japan, and it will be at next year's E3." That's pretty much how it went down in Tokyo, as Kutaragi-san officially threw down Sony's 1,000-pound gauntlet in the next-generation war.

WHAT, WHEN, WHERE?

Sony Computer Entertainment America confirmed to PSM that there will be, in their words, a "premiere event" for the next-generation PlayStation (at this point, shouldn't it really be the next-next-generation?) before the end of Sony's fiscal year in Japan — in other words, by the

end of next March. This will be followed by "more information" at E3 2005. Some Japanese reports indicated that the PS3 will actually be *playable* at the show, but SCEA could not confirm this.

PS3 PLAYABLE AT E3?

During an interview just days after Kutaragi's comments were made, PSM asked Yoshi Ono, producer of *Shadow of Rome* at Capcom, if we could expect his team to move on to PS3 development after finishing the game. His response, with a big grin: "You can look forward to meeting with Mr. [Keiji] Inafune (*Onimusha*, *Mega Man*) and myself at E3." We can't wait!

DEVELOPER GOSSIP

There's talk in the development community that Japanese game makers will receive the first official PS3 dev kits shortly after the system is unveiled next spring.

However, we've also been told by development sources that key developers have had early PS3 hardware for several months, and are just waiting for the "official" kit from SCEI to get a better grasp on what they can really do with it.

THE RELEASE DATE — MAYBE

So, what about release dates? Anything right now is just speculation, but the latest rumors (and remember, these are just that: rumors) have it that the PS3 will go on sale in Japan in December of 2005, and the U.S. in March 2006. If true, this would definitely put a damper on Nintendo and Microsoft's plans to get a real leg up on Sony with their next-gen system by launching them in the fall of 2005, just a few months before PS3 explodes onto the scene.

Count on PSM to bring you all the latest on PS3 every month, right here in PSNEXT!

PSM BREAKS LANGUAGE BARRIERS

On the portable front, Sony has confirmed one awesome-sounding new feature, and elaborated on an existing one for the PlayStation Portable. The new feature (technical software) we're talking about is called *Talkman*, and it means that you'll be able to speak into your PSP in English and have it automatically translated into the native language of who you're playing against — a Japanese player will hear a (presumably rough) version of what you said come out of their PSP. If Sony can nail the technology, this could be incredibly cool. Otherwise, we see things getting goofy fast.

Also on the multiplayer front, Sony has confirmed that up to 16 PSPs will be able to communicate wirelessly without the need for any sort of wi-fi access point. Of course, as we've reported before, you will be able to access the Internet at any of the growing number of wi-fi hotspots popping up all over the country — and the world.

JAPANESE PSP GAME LIST GROWS

A number of new PSP games were recently announced for the Japanese PSP, most of which we expect to be playable at this year's Tokyo Game Show at the end of September. They include:

Arika

- TGM-K (Puzzle)
- Technic Cute (Rhythm Action)

Idea Factory

- Shin Tenmakai (Simulation RPG)

Koei

- Mahjong Taikai (Board Game)
- Sangokushi (Historical Simulation)

Konami

- Powerful Pro Baseball
- Winning Eleven (Soccer)

Sunrise Interactive

- "New Type Simulation Game"

Spike

- RS Revolution (Racing)

Sony Computer Entertainment

- Derby (Horse Racing)
- Ghost In The Shell: Stand Alone Complex (FPS)
- Popolocrois Monogatari (RPG)
- Sarugee (Action — possibly Ape Escape)

Namco

- Shin Mojibittan (Puzzle)

Marvelous Interactive

- AI Series Mahjong (Board Game)
- AI Series Igo (Board Game)
- AI Series Shougo (Board Game)
- Bokujou Monogatari (Simulation)
- Kawa no Nushi Tsuru (Fishing)
- Pilot ni Narou (Flight Simulation)



ANSWERS FROM THE FUTURE!



Once a month, using top-secret technology (okay, it's a bunch of beer cans and wire hangers Bill glued together — but hey, it works), PSM is able to open a rift in the space-time continuum and communicate with our very own Randy Nelson... in the year 2025. He's already seen PS3 and PS4, so if you've got a question, he's got your answer — from the future!

Do you think the PS3 will use DVD-ROM, Blu-Ray, or HD-DVD? — Bill Tedian, Phoenix AZ

RANDY 2025: Developers in your time had just barely begun to scratch the surface of the storage limits of dual-layer DVDs, so there was really no need to move on to a higher-capacity format for PS3. Throw in a whole bunch of fancy new hardware texture compression/decompression tricks and the need became even less. PS3 will — I mean did — support progressive scan DVD and game playback by default.

Does the PS3 have an HDD like the Xbox, or what? — Phillip Huang, Queens NY

RANDY 2025: I seem to recall the PS2 HDD not really turning out to be the earth-shaking add-on everyone thought it would be. Maybe that's why Sony stuck to high capacity memory cards and server-side storage for content download and online gaming, respectively.

I'm worried that I'll end up scratching my PS screen by accident. Is Sony doing anything to prevent that? — Trey Reynolds, Carlsbad CA
RANDY 2025: Just take a look at the PDAs available in your time. They have special scratch hindering coatings to keep them from getting messed up with everyday use. Of course, you can always do what some people I know did with their PSPs, and buy those little sheets of PDA screen protector material and cut it to size. Worked like a charm!

Well, looks like the old rift in the space-time continuum is about to repair itself, so I'll catch you later — 21 years later, to be exact!

Have a question about the PSP or PS3? Send it to us at psm@futurenetworkusa.com with the words "Randy 2025" in the subject, and we'll have our Randy pass it along to his future self. Crazy, huh?



"Weapons
inspectors
have found
NO threat."

—August 24, 1964



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RANTS & RAVES

What YOU have to say about the hottest PlayStation topics

RANTS

"My problem is with racism online. Everyone is entitled to trash talk, but more and more often I'm hearing racist remarks. This is ruining it for me. I currently play about 14 games online, and every single game has had some freakin' racists. On all PS2 games you don't even get the option to boot someone acting this way. Yeah, I know that in SOCOM you can vote people out, but it doesn't do any good if it's a whole clan of racist pricks. Something needs to be done about this issue and I'm not talking about more filters! Have a place you can report this behavior along with the glitches and cheaters! Then these people can be banned for their actions." —Chris Downey, Oxford MS

"The PlayStation 2 has two theme-park slots. So why the bloody hell are there PS2 games that don't recognize the second slot? Is it even physically possible for some developers out there didn't get the word? Unless they call the underside of a rock home, I seriously doubt it. And yes, there are still moments when I'm forced to either turn off the console and move the requisite card, or just yank it out despite the fact that "technically" I "shouldn't" do that, because the game in question has the audacity to ignore the second accessory port that everyone has known about since the first pirated images of the PS2 surfaced all those years ago." —Ryan Hackman, Sonoma CA

"I am officially declaring war on all sports games. I mean real sports games, like Madden. I keep on talking to these freakin' jocks that think they're gamers because they have NFL 2K2 and 2K3! Last issue, you guys had like a five-page thing on Madden 2005! You're killing me! So I vote we separate. The real games go in our local games stores, and the football and baseball games go in stores like The Gap." —"Funkamander," via the Internet

RAVES

"Will there ever be a pause in the life of videogaming? As of right now, there doesn't seem to be much of a threat to the progression of technology. I remember seeing the graphics of my father's Commodore 64 and they used to blow my mind away. But now when we think back we ask ourselves "Why on earth did I play such a horrible thing?" Videogames have advanced so much in the last 20 years. How is it going to be in the next 20 years? Will video games get "too real"? I hope video games will prosper in the future, and I'll support them until it is impossible for me to hold a controller in my feeble hands!" —Phillip Rodriguez, Undisclosed Location

FAN ART

Unleash your inner artist! Fan art submissions can be sent to PSM online at psm@futurenetworkusa.com — just be sure to include the words "Fan Art" in the subject line of your e-mail!

▼ Just in time for the release of *Mortal Kombat: Deception*, ALVIN EPPS sends us this group shot of four of our favorite MK characters: Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Raiden, and Kenschl.

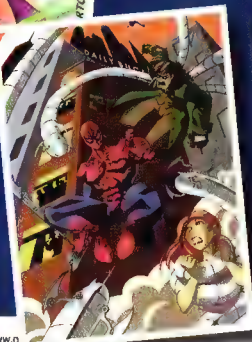


▲ JESSICA CORREA put her oil painting skills to the test to create this interesting new look for Final Fantasy VII's big bad, Sephiroth.



▲ STEVEN BARTON really likes Ivy's "Summon Suffering" move from *Summon Suffering*. He's on the other hand, doesn't.

► TIMOTHY LUK clothes again with another great piece of Spider-Man 2 art. Keep up the great work!



PSM Readers' Top 10 Most Wanted Games

1. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas



2. Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

3. Final Fantasy XII

4. Kingdom Hearts II

5. Devil May Cry 3

6. Gran Turismo 4

7. WWE Smackdown! Vs. Raw

8. Jak 3

9. Killzone

10. Ratchet & Clank: Up your Arsenal

Cast your vote at www.psonline.com!

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PADRE!**



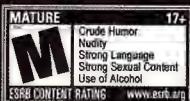
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PlayStation 2



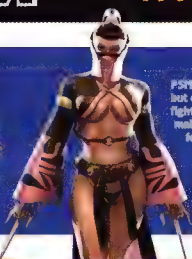
AVAILABLE AT: GameStop EB GAMES
electronic boutique

PSM

WHAT'S HOT IN OCTOBER

4

RELEASING:
100 BULLETS
Mortal Kombat:
Deception 2
BloodRayne 2



PSM'S PICK: The bloodiest, but certainly one of the best fighting games in history makes its return to PS2, featuring awesome new interactive stages, more fatalities, and online play—yes!

5

RELEASING:
Tony Hawk's
Underground 2
Conflict: Vietnam
Leisure Suit Larry
Magna Cum Laude
NBA Live 2005



PSM'S PICK: The THPS games are always worth looking forward to, but this one, with its new destructible environments, puts a whole new pin on the series.

11

RELEASING:
Midway Arcade
Treasures 2
Cowboy Bebop



PSM'S PICK: Gamers, gamers, such as *Midway Treasures II*, *S.T.U.N. Heroes*, *Cyber Ball 2072*, and more make up this 20+ game roster on this amazing \$20 compilation. It's a steal!

12

RELEASING:
X-Men Legends
FIFA Soccer 2005
Nightmare Before
Christmas



PSM'S PICK: Four-player Action RPG mayhem as one of the world's greatest superhero teams? We're there!

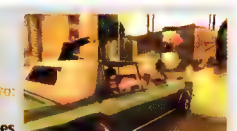
16

BOSS DAY
It's time to give props to bosses everywhere, and none is bigger (or more aptly named) than Big Boss of *Metal Gear*. Might we suggest a glass eye as an appropriate gift to mark the day?



18

RELEASING:
Grand Theft Auto:
San Andreas
Death by Degrees



PSM'S PICK: Don't worry if you haven't pre-ordered—there'll probably be plenty of copies of the hottest game of the year to be found on day one.

25

RELEASING:
Ace Combat 5



Namco's high-flying aerial combat series ups the ante with wingman control and graphics to die for.

26

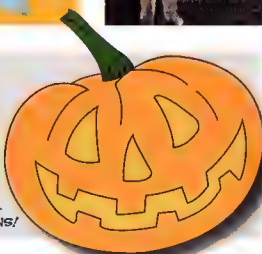
RELEASING:
Killzone
Robotech Invasion
Second Sight



PSM'S PICK: Sony's online FPS brings the intensity of near-future battlegrounds to your game room, without all the messy shrapnel to clean up.

31

HALLOWEEN
DRESS UP LIKE YOUR FAVORITE VIDEOGAME CHARACTER—JUST DON'T TRY TO DO ANY OF THEIR "SPECIAL" MOVES WITHOUT FIRST CONSIDERING THE RAMIFICATIONS OF YOUR ACTIONS!



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK

NOVEMBER

11/1 Ghost Recon 2, Lobo
11/2 Call of Duty: Finest Hour, Duel Masters, Godzilla: Save the Earth, Mega Man X8, Cabela's Big Game Hunter 05, Shadow of Rome, NCAA March Madness 2005, World Championship Poker, Lemmy Snicket: A Series of Unfortunate Events, Savage Safari Hunt, Ghost in the Shell, Inuyasha RPG, King of Fighters 2003, Lord of the Rings: The Third Age, Polar Express, Chulip, Pinball Hall of Fame
11/9 Battlefield: Modern Combat, Urban Sims, American Chopper, Capcom Fighting Evolution, King Arthur
Spyro: A Hero's Tail, Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal

Altered Beast, Sonic Mega Collection Plus,
WWE SmackDown! Vs. Raw, Gully Gear Isuzak
11/16 Gran Turismo 4
11/19 Goldeneye: Rogue Agent, Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
11/16 Prince of Persia 2, Ford Mustang 40th Anniversary, Predator: Concrete Jungle, ESPN College Hoops 2005, Rumble Roses, Digital Devil Saga, Dragonball Z Budokai 3, Yu-Gi-Oh! Capsule Monster Coliseum, Dead to Rights II: Hell to Pay, Sega Superstars, Super Monkey Ball DX, Sulkoden IV
11/17 Need for Speed Underground 2
11/19 Fahrenheit, Wild Arms: Alter Code F
11/23 Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition, Jak 3, Neo Contra

DECEMBER

12/1 StarCraft: Ghost
12/2 Devil May Cry 3
12/23 The Fast and the Furious

JANUARY

1/3 Cold Winter, Metal Slug 4 & 5, Red Ninja: End of Honor
1/4 ESPN MLB 2K5
1/11 Virtua Quest
1/15 TimeSplitters: Future Perfect
1/18 Mercenaries
1/21 The Warriors

Featuring: TALIB KWELI



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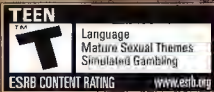
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PlayStation 2





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or lay it all on the line
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SRSgame.com

tune it up and turn it loose.

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- 31 NHL 2005
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- 35 Street Racing Syn.
- 23 Viewtiful Joe

SCORING

- 10 CLASSIC
A rare gem. Our highest recommendation.
- 9 OUTSTANDING
One of the better games this year.
- 8 VERY GOOD
You can't go wrong.
- 7 GOOD
A solid game.
- 6 OKAY
Kind of fun, but no big deal.
- 5 SO-SO
You've got to love the subject matter.
- 4 LACKING
Big flaws really hurt this game.
- 3 BAD
Not fun at all.
- 2 AWFUL
This game is an insult.
- 1 WHY?
Why would anyone do this to us?

We take our reviews very seriously. We spend hours upon hours playtesting each title so that we can give you the absolute best information to help you buy.

Games that score an 8, 9 or 10 earn a Bronze, Silver or Gold PSM Must-Buy Award. We don't hand these beauties out easily, so if you see one on a review, a game box or advertising, you'll want to be sure to check that game out.

Finally, when looking up past scores, keep in mind that older games usually wouldn't fare as well if they were reviewed today.



VIEWTIFUL JOE

One of Gamecube's biggest games made better for PS2



▲ Dante's moves are different from Joe's in many ways, mostly because he's armed to the teeth.

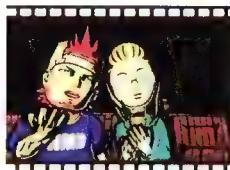
Capcom's decision to move its previously GameCube-only actioner *Viewtiful Joe* to PS2 is a major victory, as it's easily one of the most original and involving action titles to come along in ages.

Better still, rather than just giving us a straight port, Capcom's new production house Clover Studio has added a second playable character specifically for PS2 users: Dante from the *Devil May Cry* series.

Dante himself plays great, too. With his own unique adventure and a specific play style (he often fights using guns and a sword), this addition really adds a lot to an already strong gaming experience and helps make it feel fresh even for veteran Gamecube players. You'll have to pound through Joe's regular quest first in order to unlock Dante's, but the journey is more than worth it.

Now, on the off-chance that you've never heard of *Viewtiful Joe* before, it goes down like this: Joe is a Fred Durst look alike who loves campy cult movies, especially those that involve kung-

<< ONE OF THE MOST ORIGINAL AND INVOLVING ACTION TITLES TO COME ALONG IN AGES >>



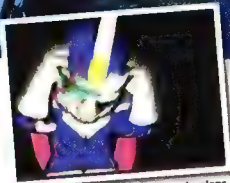
▲ This is Joe when he's not wearing tights and a cape. The dish on the right is his loving girlfriend Sylvia, who isn't nearly as sly as she looks.



▲ Joe's abilities are beautifully worked into gameplay. For instance, using Slow will cause this helicopter to sink, and also make its missiles easier to dodge or kick back.

fu or monsters. While watching one such cinematic masterpiece, Joe's girlfriend Sylvia has been sucked into the movie by the villain — yeah, you read that correctly — and it's up to Joe to travel into the film to save her. There, his hero, Captain Blue, helps him to become a super hero: he dons a flashy, red, Power Rangers-style costume, starts busting out sick kung-fu moves, and even learns to wield VFX powers. These are special abilities inspired by the game's in-film setting. Joe can slow down time to make super-fast enemies easier to hit, speed up to make himself super-fast, or zoom in and strike a heroic pose, instilling fear into his enemies' very hearts.

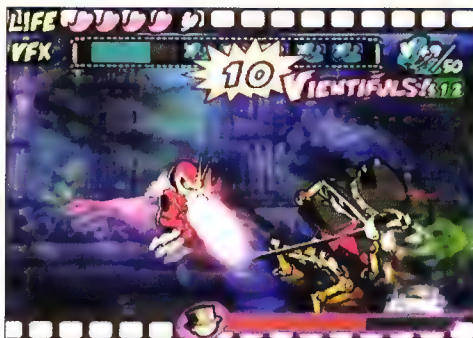
These VFX powers are the key to enjoying *Viewtiful Joe* to its fullest. Yes, you could conceivably punch and kick your way through the game using only a limited amount of Joe's abilities, but cleverly using his skills will earn extra goodies. Plus, let's face it: it's a hell of a lot more fun, too. Not that the game wasn't fun to begin with — its fast combat system, unique art style, and vibrant personality are additive right



▲ Joe's hero is Captain Blue, who develops a rather interesting relationship with our red-clad hero.

from the beginning.

But it's those special powers that grab us every time. Slowing down time to make an enemy easier to hit or speeding up to mach speed feels fantastic, while zooming in for those extreme close-ups just flat-out rocks. What's more, the powers integrate beautifully into the gameplay. For example, early on, you'll face a helicopter. It's tough, until you realize that slowing time will enable you to kick its missiles back at it, and also slow the rotors so much that it falls from the sky. Despite your powers, there's still plenty of challenge here, especially when you throw in imaginative enemies and some kick-butt boss fights.



▲ Be warned — this game isn't designed to be easy. It'll test your skills in a very real, very old-school way.

Our only gripe is that the game is a little short, even with the added Dante bonus quest. Still, it's certainly one of the most enjoyable and original experiences you'll find. Buy it.

JEREMY DUNHAM

◀ Dante actually fits right in with the game's super-deformed art style.

PSM
FINAL SCORE

9

OUTSTANDING

This is the best action game you've played in a long time. It's got a great personality and cool graphics. Henshin-a-go-go to the store and get it now!

PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action



▲ The thing that looks like a strip of film is your VFX meter, which enables you to slow down or speed up time, as well as zoom in to intimidate enemies and gain slick new moves.

▼ It's hard to describe this game's personality; it's campy and goofy, yet undeniably cool.

► The art style is really interesting — everything is flat, but placed in 3D space, like a souped-up take on *Parappa the Rapper*.

HOW IT STACKS UP

Viewtiful Joe	9
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	9
Nightshade	8
Seven Samurai 20XX	6
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	5

This Rebel Vanguard's repulse launcher is handy for taking out large vehicles.



PSM
MUST-BUY
BRONZE

ONLINE
COMPATIBLE

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

The birth of a soon to be legendary franchise



▲ When on foot, run away from AT-STs: one good shot and you're Rebel toast.

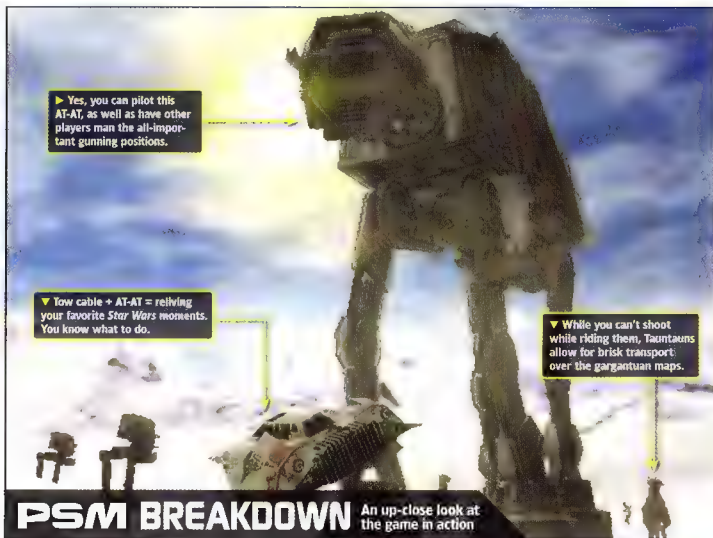
The double-edged *Star Wars* license carries with it a startling degree of expectations. But more so, Lucas' *Mona Lisa* fran-

chise lends itself exceedingly well to a number of game genres. Why is it, then, that a large scale, vehicular- and foot-based combat game, a la *Battlefield 1942*, using the *Star Wars* universe is just now coming out? We're betting on technology, though the task itself is as intimidating as it is risky. Thank heavens for developer Pandemic Studios.

Star Wars Battlefront is almost a dream come true. The game allows for eight-on-eight combat, online or LAN, with another eight NPCs aiding each side, effectively making each

match 16 on 16. The varying soldier, weapon and vehicle types exponentially increase the gameplay sophistication — which is, at its core, shoot, shoot, shoot — as does the ability to issue commands to AI teammates. The only thing hampering the depth of the game is the lack of game modes. Case in point: whether playing single-player, split-screen co-op, or online matches, your only objective is to capture all of the map's command posts, or kill every enemy — both result in glorious victory.

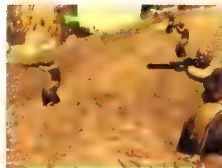
Despite the limited player intent, *Battlefront* is a commendable success. Not because the game is flawless in execution — it isn't; it's because it creates an undeniable sense of scale and scope in an



PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action

almost perfectly crafted *Star Wars* universe. From running the claustrophobic labyrinths of Tatooine to piloting an AT-AT on snow-covered Hoth, playing *Battlefront* lets *Star Wars* fans vicariously live the life of a Rebel soldier; or a Wookiee; or even a Droideka, for that matter. Appropriate third party races — Gungans, Jawas, Ewoks, etc — also pepper the landscape and interact with players, fleshing out Lucas' world better than any *Star Wars* game prior. Additionally, using both



▲ Tusken Raiders, depending on your faction, can either help or impede your mission.



▲ Narrow tunnels and hallways can become hectic bottlenecks as opposing troops try to overtake crucial command posts.

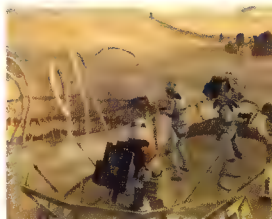
the Clone Wars and Galactic Civil War eras as backdrops ensures that even the most capricious fanboys will have little to complain about.

On the downside, being bound to a simultaneous release with the DVD movies has obviously caused some heavy feature pruning. It's not as blatantly unfinished as say, *Enter the Matrix*, and what's included in the game is stimulating fun, no doubt. But another six months could have produced more game variety (every match is a Domination/Deathmatch hybrid, but Escort, CTF, and Bomb Tag-style missions would easily fit) better balancing; more maps; oh, the promise! Other quibbles include an overly generous auto-aim that renders dodging almost useless (though it can be turned off), and units that sometimes seem to die a bit too easily.

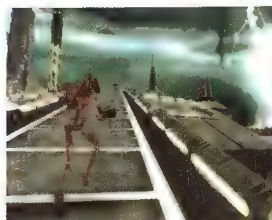
A stable foundation is what we have here; a story outline sans descriptive embellishments; a mas-



▲ Certain character classes have jetpacks they can use to reach the high ground in a big hurry.



▲ Periphery traps, like this Sarlacc, add another layer of depth the maps.



▲ Droids may not have feelings, but they deal out a can of whoop-ass as well as anyone else.



▲ That may not be Chewie, but we still feel bad as this Stormtrooper is about to singe some of that silky brown hair.

terpiece suspended in its primer state. What *Battlefront* amounts to, then, is a compendium of nostalgic locales and characters, intertwined with moments of sheer mayhem, awe and a vibrant *Star Wars* spirit. In fact, that last bit may be the most important part: tuning or gameplay shortcoming aside, this feels so much like those exciting, chaotic, *Star Wars* battles that it's almost irresistible.

That will do just fine until *Battlefront 2* heads our way. KAISER HWANG

HOW IT STACKS UP

SOCOM II	10
Ghost Recon	8
Star Wars Battlefront	8
DOT EON	8
Rainbow Six 3	7

PSM
FINAL SCORE

8

VERY GOOD

Star Wars fan or not, *Battlefront* does a laudable job of first creating a fine mass-scale shooter, and then integrating it seamlessly in the *Star Wars* universe.



The BARD'S TALE

Coming Fall 2004

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PlayStation 2



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“...Right Now, There Is No Other
Game In The Genre That Looks
Remotely As Good.”

—PSM

“...It Has Skyrocketed To The Top
Of My Most-Wanted Games List.”

—Gamespy

“Turning RPG Clichés On Their Head.”

—Electronic Gaming Monthly

“...Intelligent Scriptwriting And A
Well-Developed Sense Of Humor.”

—GamePro



Summon Eccentric Characters To Do Your Dirty Work,
Like This Poor Old Bastard Who Finds Traps...the Hard Way.



Less A, More I — Don't Underestimate Your Crafty Opponents.

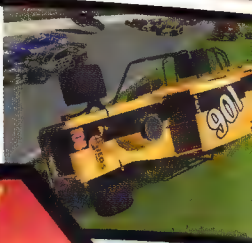


Advanced Attitude System — Your Snarky or Nice decisions
change the course of the game for true replayability.



Get your start racing open-wheel Modifieds. These short track screamers are a great introduction to driving sideways and upside down.

BLOWING YOUR ENGINE IS A ROOKIE MISTAKE. GO BACK ONE SPACE.



It's in the Game™

Grab the wheel and develop your speed skills. Manage your team and your temper. Then fight through four racing series all the way to the Cup.



TANGLE WITH KENSETH IN FINAL RACE. LONG PIT COSTS YOU THE WIN.

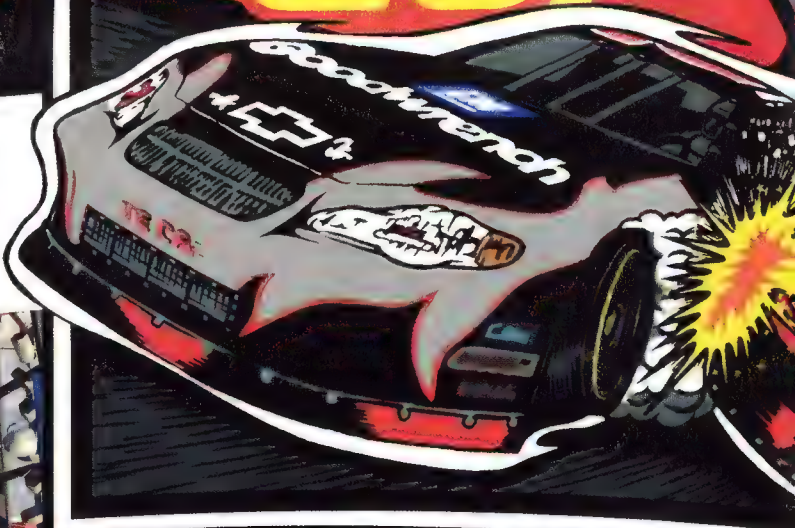
LOSE A TURN

FEUD WITH EVERY DRIVER IN THE SERIES. GET BLACKBALLED.

START OVER



CHASE FOR THE CUP



PlayStation.2



MOVE AHEAD 2 SPACES



Prove your wheel skills in the Busch Series. Perfect your fender-dent-in', bump-n-run and the next thing you hit will be the

BIG TIME

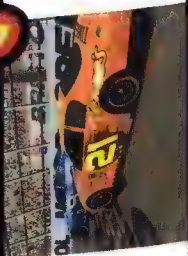
CAN YOU GO THE DISTANCE?



**YOU'RE IN
THE TOP TEN.
GO DIRECTLY
TO CHASE FOR
THE CUP™ MODE.**



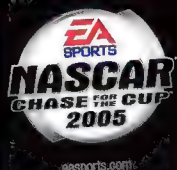
Welcome to the
 Nextel Cup Series.
 The fastest cars. Best drivers.
 And highest stakes.
 Battle through 26
 races to a final 10-race
FREE-FOR-ALL



**FORCE MISTAKES WITH THE
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GO BACK ONE SPACE

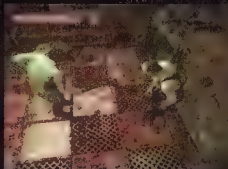


Online play not available on all platforms. See back of product packs for details. INTERNET CONNECTION required for online play. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet Connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). Check platform box for online play.

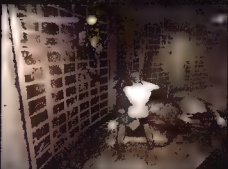
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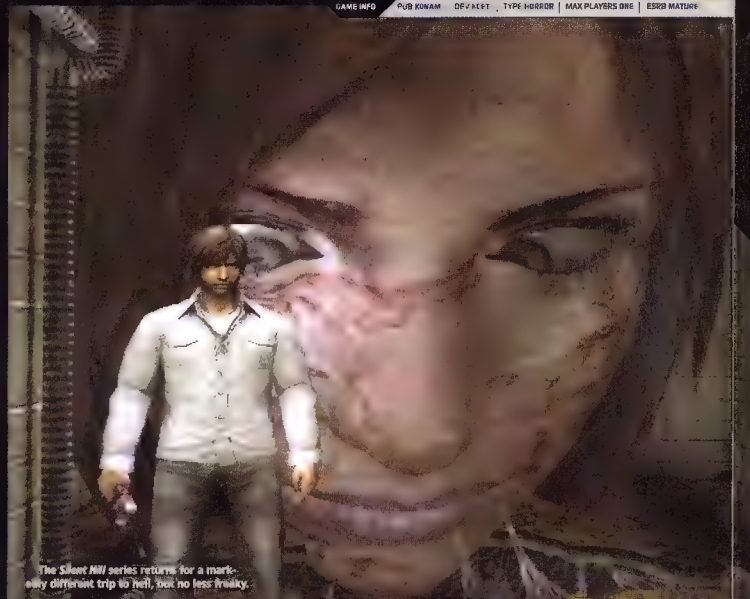
While you won't be sticking your hands in toilets, you're still bent on jumping down pitch-dark holes and the like.



Ghosts in *SH4* are effective for frights as they're not easily slowed, except with special items and weapons.



There are no more flashlights. No more static-giving radio. *SH4* takes a bold turn for the series.



The *Silent Hill* series returns for a markedly different trip to hell, but no less freaky.

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

You check in, but you can't check out

PSM
MUST-BUY
BRONZE

The *Silent Hill* series has very rarely been about gameplay. With its twisted brand of psychological terror, grotesque imagery and mysterious cast of characters, every single chapter in the three-strong series has gone on to inspire more than its share of plot analyses. But gameplay has always remained fairly pedestrian — shoot this, run here, solve this puzzle. Aside from the series' amazingly effective scare factor, it's always been more adventure, less action.

Until now, at least: *Silent Hill 4: The Room* seeks to change up this

balance with the series' most action-focused challenge yet.

You are Henry Townshend, a regular guy with a regular life — until the nightmares start. From this point on, you're trapped inside your small apartment with no exit, except for a strange portal that suddenly opens in the bathroom wall. Soon, you're tossed headfirst into a series of grisly encounters with your real-world neighbors in a set of alternate world scenarios, each with their own logic and purpose.

And the feeling of claustrophobia and helplessness works wonderfully. In true *SH* fashion, you'll become immersed in piecing together clues, peeping in at your neighbors, and wondering what that strange stain is on your living room wall. And the fact that the apartment segments take place in first person mode (journeys through the portal are still third-

person, though) makes the paranoid vulnerability almost palpable.

Physically, you're stronger and more combat-ready than previous *SH* protagonists, which enables you to juke an enemy's attack and power-up your weapon swing for heavy damage. Good thing, too; *Silent Hill 4* is definitely more action and combat-oriented than previous entries in the spooky series.

Does it work? Yes, but this focus on combat isn't always helped by the game's dodgy targeting and suspect collision detection. If you're used to rationing out the game's spare health drinks and ammo, you're golden — but after awhile, *SH4* throws in another twist in the form of a traveling companion, who adds to the plot but often serves to make gameplay

cumbersome and frustrating.

For every time *SH4* falters, it redeems itself by throwing series fans a bone with countless references to the *Silent Hill* mythos ("Was that...? Could it be?"). Plus, graphics and soundtrack remain among the PS2's finest. And for a series that remains so near and dear to so many fans' hearts, that's more than enough reason to relish *SH4*'s hits, as well as endure its many misses.

FRANCESCA REYES

HOW IT STACKS UP

<i>Silent Hill</i>	9
<i>The Suffering</i>	8
<i>Silent Hill 4</i>	8
<i>Silent Hill 3</i>	7
<i>Silent Hill 2</i>	7

PSM 8 **VERY GOOD**
A few tweaks to the *Silent Hill* formula make for an uneven, but satisfying, psycho romp for series fans.

This isn't Las Vegas. What you do in *Silent Hill*'s alternate universes doesn't necessarily stay there.

PUB KUSH DEV: ENP/SEGA MAX PLAYERS: FOUR RATED: EVERYONE

PSM
MUST-BUY
BRONZEONLINE
COMPATIBLE

▲ Why behavior like this would draw a flag and start a fight is beyond us... that hip check could have been accidental, right?

ESPN NHL 2K5

Smooth is the word that best describes the *ESPN NHL* franchise. It's always looked great and played equally well, and this year is no different — mostly. Sega's latest ice hockey title takes a couple of steps forward, but unfortunately a couple steps back, too. Don't get us wrong: it's still awesome, but it's not such an easy winner in the EA versus Sega battle this season.

Presentation, as usual, continues to shine for *ESPN*. Graphics, animation, and commentary rocks, but it's the new stuff that warrants discussion. For instance, the Franchise Mode is much improved, with the ability to manage your entire organization, but it still doesn't match up with EA's RPG-rific *Dynasty Mode*. A new Party Mode, however, adds straight-from-the-arcade mini-games that are a blast for you and three friends. Competition ranges from obstacles courses and shooting competitions to passing exercises, but are always a little cooler than typical drills.

The actual hockey is a bit of a mixed bag in *2K5*. It still controls beautifully (that "smoothness" we mentioned earlier), and the gameplay is again top-notch — once you tweak it, that is. The default settings are pretty awful. Turn fighting and penalties down to the lowest possible setting, then enjoy. Why? New right stick moves (hooking, slashing, etc.) are neat, but you'll get whistled for a penalty almost every time you try them. Also, a new tension meter shows how ready to drop the gloves each team is, and the fighting engine is vastly improved, too (though it still trails EA's). In another nice new touch, your team does get brief unlimited turbo to simulate the momentum shift you get from winning a fight. The developers were overly anxious to show off the fighting, though, as you'll be brawling constantly.

Ultimately, *ESPN NHL 2K5* is great. And like *ESPN NFL 2K5* before it, it's just \$20 this year (though it's worth \$50). Just remember to adjust the gameplay settings to a less pugilistic level first. RYAN MCCAFFREY

PSM 8 VERY GOOD This skates in place, but it's still great, and the price makes it a must-have.
FINAL SCORE

PUB EA SPORTS DEV: EA VANCOUVER MAX PLAYERS: FOUR RATED: EVERYONE

ONLINE
COMPATIBLEPSM
MUST-BUY
BRONZE

▲ Is full of hard hits and knockdowns, which are admittedly fun to watch, but can get in the way of the gameplay.

NHL 2005

Our virtual hockey players are still icing down the bruises they took after the über-physical action in last year's *NHL 2004*, but ready or not, the 2005 game has hit, and the bad news is that it's still too intense in the checking department. The good news, however, is that the rest of the game has been cleaned up nicely and the result is an outstanding hockey title that is both fun and fully featured.

Like the rest of the EA Sports lineup, a premium has been placed on maximum user control this season. The wrist and slap shots have been given their own buttons (Ⓢ and Ⓞ, respectively), the sadistic right stick checking system remains, and pass velocity is once again regulated by how long you hold down the Ⓢ button. Cool.

This attention to detail in the controls is the best part of *NHL 2005*: you can zip a crisp pass onto the tape of a teammate's stick, you can softly loft the puck into your own zone on a penalty kill, and this year's game actually forces you to dump the puck in so that you can set up a play; you'll be crushed by an AI body check if you try to bring it all the way in yourself. You can even call quick offensive and defensive plays with the D-pad. As a result, scoring a goal is very satisfying in 2005, because you actually feel like you earned it.

Other minor, though appreciated, improvements pepper the game both on and off the ice. The graphics have obviously been given an overhaul, and the *Dynasty Mode* continues to show refinements. One of this year's big adjustments is in the user interface, which now mimics the whole PDA/email process of communication. It's a natural-feeling way to set the prices for tickets or choose which prospects to call up from the minors.

The bottom line is that *NHL 2005* is an excellent hockey title with a lot of realistic touches. It's just that the action is ultimately brought down a tad by the still too over the top, arcade-y checking system. RYAN MCCAFFREY

PSM 8 VERY GOOD If real action were this hard-hitting, entire teams would be knocked out!
FINAL SCORE



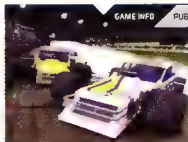
EVIL RISES.



▲ It looks better than ever, though we'd really prefer a smoother framerate to add graphical detail.



▲ You don't start as a NASCAR driver—you've got to work your way up, racing trucks, featherlites, and other minor circuits.



▲ The grudges and alliances are cool, but would an "enemy" driver really take himself out of a race just to sabotage you?

NASCAR 2005: RACE TO THE CUP

You gotta start at the bottom, kid

PSM MUST-BUY
BRONZE



EA's *NASCAR* series is already a great simulation of America's favorite racing league; it faithfully recreates the tracks, cars and events of its premier league. So where can Tiburon go to improve it? Down. Down through the leagues and races that a driver must compete in to work his or her way up to the top level of the Nextel Cup.

NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup immerses you in the life and career of a NASCAR hopeful, from the humble

beginnings of street racing, up through the Featherlite Modified Series, the Craftsman Truck Series, the NASCAR National Series and on to the Nextel Cup. Along the way, you acquire prestige, build alliances and rivalries and create your own racing team where you control everything from training pit crews to setting prices on merchandise. It's extremely well thought out, provides a more natural difficulty curve, and makes for a compelling reason to race essentially the same race again and again.

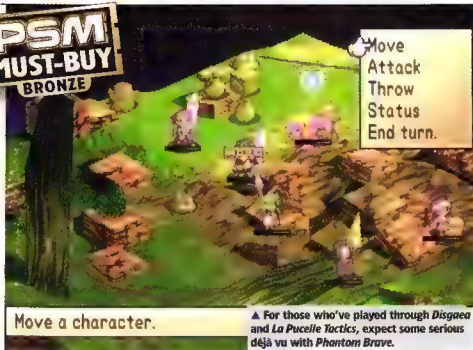
But the basic engine running beneath needs some work. Graphics are enhanced, but the framerate still gets very chuggy at times. The driver personalities need some work as well. It's cool to see them hold grudges, but the extent to which they'll go after you

to exact revenge in a race is extreme.

Chase for the Cup is a great game for NASCAR fans, full of the sport's flavor and culture, but it needs some work and tuning to justify recommending it to someone who's not already a stock car fan. **TOM PRICE**

PSM 8 VERY GOOD
An incredibly valiant attempt to make an accessible *NASCAR* game, but many will still think it falls a bit short because you can only do so much with turning left.

PSM MUST-BUY
BRONZE



Move
Attack
Throw
Status
End turn.

Move a character.

▲ For those who've played through *Disgaea* and *La Pucelle Tactics*, expect some serious déjà vu with *Phantom Brave*.

From the same minds that crafted *Atlus's Disgaea: Hour of Darkness* and *Master of Darkness*, *Phantom Brave* tells the tale of a wee, orphaned Chroma (those who can summon ghost-like phantoms) named Marona who innocently doles out her combat wares to anyone in need—for a fee.

Unfortunately, Marona's constant companion, Ash, is a phantom—he was killed in the fight that took the lives of Marona's parents, but was spared from final death himself. He has sworn to protect Marona from harm, but he spooks the living folks,

so Marona lives lonely life. Though not quite as light-hearted as either *La Pucelle* or *Disgaea*, *PB's* localization is excellent, making poor Marona's melancholy journey just the right amount of endearing.

Battle is where *PB* shows its true colors. Not strictly grid-based, the typical strategy RPG rules mostly apply, but Marona's ability to create



▲ The hand-animated sprites and rudimentary spell effects are retro and emotive, if not cutting-edge.

▲ Even though Marona is perky and cute, the story isn't always upbeat.

PHANTOM BRAVE

2D dungeon crawling with a spooky twist

and summon varying classes of phantoms in combat using objects on the field is an interesting, complex twist. The fact that each phantom uses found or equipped objects as weapons keeps each fight fresh. Throwing enemies and objects out of bounds, as well as managing your growing troop of customizable phantoms serve to keep gameplay

deep enough, but don't expect this to be any more or less accessible than Nippon Ichi's previous efforts. *PB's* appeal lies in its quirky import-minded aesthetics and challenging sub- and post-game antics. **FRANCESCA REYES**



▲ The game's depth comes from recruiting differently-enabled phantoms and learning which objects they should use as weapons.

PSM 8 VERY GOOD
Yet another huge, personality drenched, comically deep strategy RPG from the new masters.

PUB HP GAMES DEV FRONTIER DEV MAX PLAYERS ONE RATED PENDING



▲ Hey Mister, are those free birds people keep mentioning still available? 'Cause I'm really hungry.

DOG'S LIFE

Over 20 years ago, David Braben (along with Ian Bell) co-designed one of the most groundbreaking, classic, best games of all time, *Elite*. These days, though, it seems he's gone a little nuts — but in a sorta good way.

Welcome to *Dog's Life*, the story of Jake, a typical dog with typically doggy concerns: barking, sniffing, knocking over trashcans in search of snacks, digging, peeing... oh, and eventually rescuing his potential mate, Daisy, from the clutches of a pair of dognappers.

This is one strange beast of a game. It mostly consists of a series of mini-games that reward Jake with bones — bones being the status symbol among the canine set, so the more bones Jake can collect, the more "powerful" he becomes.

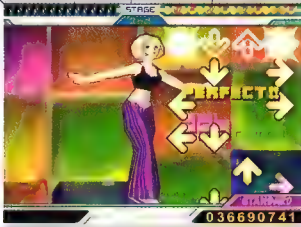
The mini-games include things like racing, playing tag, digging matches and "marking your territory" contests, as well as using Jake's first-person Smellovision-cam to sniff out interesting scents. Along the way, Jake gets to play Lassie by helping recover lost items and track a criminal. He also "possesses" other dogs with different talents (some are smaller and can fit through low-slung doggy doors, others are stronger or better jumpers, etc.) to solve various puzzles.

Now, obviously this is a rather unique, different sort of game. It's also eye-rollingly funny in a fart-pee kind of way. It looks good and the controls are intuitive, if a little slippery. The big problem is that, after a couple of levels, it never really offers anything new — you sniff (incidentally, Smellovision has a nausea-inducing camera), you pee, you find stuff for people, you learn various doggy tricks, and repeat until it ends.

However, if *Dog's Life* wears out its welcome before the finish, it's also a different and interesting ride up until then. It's no classic, but it deserves a nice pat on the head and some kibbles. **JEFF LUNDRIKAN**

PSM 7 GOOD Man's best friend is still his TV, but play this with your nephew anyhow.
FINAL SCORE

PUB KONAMI DEV KONAMI MAX PLAYERS TWO RATED EVERYONE



▲ The bonus songs will remain surprises, but you'll hear some old favorites in the mix.

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION EXTREME

Ah, a fresh chance to look like an ass in the comfort of your own home! *DDR Extreme* (which is not a port of the coin-op/Japanese import of the same name) features more of the same excellent rhythmic dance gameplay fans crave with a few new doodads for good measure.

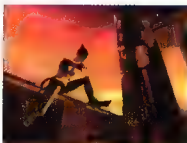
Foremost among them is Mission Mode, which presents players with various challenges: reach predetermined point goals, hit all freeze arrows — some tasks nearly make you fail on purpose. Since these skill drills step up in difficulty as you step to the beat, it's a good gauge for newbies looking to progress at their own pace beyond the Tutorial Mode, and offers no small challenge for pros. The other fun gimmick is Party Mode — aw yeah, bust out the EyeToy and use all your limbs at once (Hands and Feet mode makes a surprisingly difficult/hilarious coordination test). Some mini-games, like the *Arkanoid*-like Magical Ball, don't even involve dancing, but why complain about weird camera-based fun when it's a free bonus? Earlier home hallmarks like Workout Mode and Edit Mode return as well, so nothing's been removed to make room for the new stuff. Still, no online play — sorry.

In addition to *DDR* tracks from staples like DJ Taka, you'll find more licensed music than in past volumes, including as Junior Senior's "Move Your Feet" and Duran Duran's "The Reflex," plus remixed remakes of hits like "Waiting for Tonight" and "Like a Virgin." The first 46 tracks are unlocked when you start; the other 25 or so, you'll have to sweat to get (but they sound nice in Dolby Pro Logic II). Some songs feature distracting full-motion videos playing in the background, but at least now you can turn off your on-screen persona if you don't want that extra layer of visual clutter.

Other than that, uh... it's *DDR Extreme*'s additions are extensions, not reinventions, and that's actually good news. With *DDR Extreme*, you know what you're getting; you're just getting more of it. **DAN ARMICH**

PSM 7 VERY GOOD Mission Mode is worth trying, and no *DDR* fan will be disappointed.
FINAL SCORE

HEROES UNITE.



▲ Notice how you can't really see where you're jumping? That happens a lot in *Catwoman*.



▲ Miss Kitty isn't really into fatalities. Instead, she tends to kick bad guys clear off-screen to assumedly non-fatal ends.



▲ The environments tend to be dark, which is only a problem when something crucial like a whip anchor-point blends into the background.

CATWOMAN EA coughs up a hairball

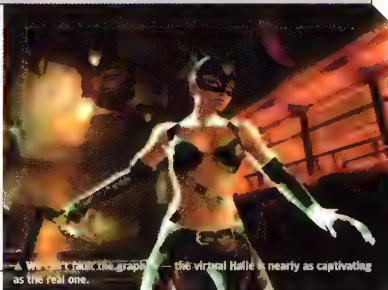
Based upon Halle Berry's latest vehicle, *Catwoman* touches on the basic points of the film's plot: Patience Phillips is killed, but brought back to life by a mystical Egyptian feline. Catwoman has the abilities of her animal half: she can scurry up walls, see in the dark, perform incredible acrobatics and claw her way out of tough situations. She even has a bullwhip that she can use to swing from lamps and yank weaponry out of her enemies' hands.

Catwoman alternates between fighting and acrobatic exploration. Brawling is handled with the two analog sticks: one moves Catwoman and the other directs her attacks. Unfortunately, Catwoman's move sets are too thin — though we were amused by her ability to strike a seductive pose that dazes guards. Enemies have no lifebars, but are defeated when they are removed from a scene, typically by being thrown through a window or into a garbage dumpster — which appear every-

where, from the inside of a dance club to the foyer of a mansion.

Graphics and animation are top-notch, and Catwoman slinks about like an exotic dancer. Control is tight, but counterintuitive, and the developers' desire to use cinematic camera work

results in frustratingly frequent blind jumps. The game's dark color palette makes matters worse, mixing key locations and rappel anchors with the background. There's just not enough gameplay polish here. **DODG TRUEMAN**



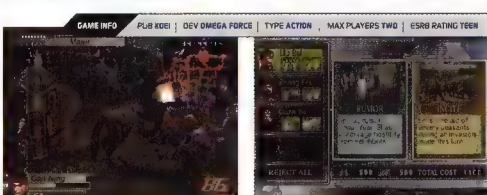
▲ We can't fault the graphics as the real one. — the virtual Halle is nearly as captivating

PSM 6 OKAY
FINAL SCORE
Catwoman is definitely a pretty face, but little more. If you really love the subject matter and absolutely have to play this game, you should probably rent it.

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE



▲ Few games can equal the magic spell cast by slicing and dicing through mountains of enemies.



▲ What's wrong with this picture? For one, you're riding a plain, old horse when there's a freakin' elephant standing right there!

▲ Each general has unique abilities, which you can use to tip the scales in your favor.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES A "Risk-y" hack and slasher

The latest entry in Koei's pseudo-historical tactical action series, *Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires* retains the addictive combat that the franchise is known for, but adds new features to keep things fresh.

Specifically, this time you conquer China through a series of invasions, territory to territory, very much like in the board game *Risk*. This adds a nice bit of depth to the proceedings: you must choose carefully which generals to employ (each has special abilities), and there are several other warlords out there vying for control as well. Plus, you can randomize the board

each time you play, so replayability is boosted as well.

Despite this new nuance, the much-loved hack and slash gameplay is still front-and-center. Like the previous games, *Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires* features a grand hero who leads his army to victory. You get to experience the giddy pleasure of wiping out hundreds

of enemy soldiers with a dazzle of spectacular moves, either on foot or from horseback. Tactics and planning aren't vital in the beginning, but as you progress, you'll find that coordinating your attacks with those of your officers becomes steadily more important. If only you could give them direct commands!

The visuals have improved from



▲ Originally, the 24 territories are split between several rulers, but it always comes down to the final two...

PSM 8 VERY GOOD
FINAL SCORE
This is every strategy-action gamer's dream. *Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires* teaches little about Chinese history, but plenty about the might of the blade.

past games, though more diversity in the foot soldiers would be nice, and the draw distance is still a bit shallow. The various maps, though not polyp-intensive, are vibrant, blending in nicely with the game's milieu. **CHRIS LADE**



▲ SRS looks okay, but a severe lack of speed makes it more tortoise than hare — and in the real world, the tortoise loses that race every time.

STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Call the police — SRS's sense of speed has been stolen! Compared to *Need For Speed Underground*, this latest cash-in on the illegal street racing craze is more like *Need of Speed Underground*.

The thrill of racing through a kinda-wide-open city (sorry, SRS, *Midnight Club II* still reigns supreme in that department) is really hurt by the fact that you can be doing 103mph and it looks like you're doing 30mph. Worse, if you use the game's adequate upgrade system to add nitrous boost, you actually seem to be going slower when the N₂O kicks in. I also counted plenty of cases of extremely choppy slowdown through turns, even in the offline, single player game.

SRS looks nice enough otherwise, and the car tuning, upgrading, and visual tweaking is pretty good. The wagering system is a neat idea, since good drivers can put their money where their mouths are and potentially walk away with loads of upgrade cash. Of course, the damage model is pretty unforgiving, so if you wreck up your ride, you pay a very stiff price at the shop — I spent at least three grand to repair my car after hitting the wall twice.

Speaking of which, the handling in the game, even after installing various suspensions, tires, weight reduction kits, etc. never quite feels as good as other, better PS2 racers. Of course, it gets extra tough to control your car through turns when you hit slowdown, too.

So, to sum it up, SRS is pretty much what it looks like: another underground street racing game. It tries very hard to emulate EA's much better *Need For Speed Underground*, and doesn't come close to touching the supreme *Midnight Club II*. I'd suggest renting it only if you simply can't wait a couple more months for better racing games. RANDY NELSON

PSM 5 SO-SO This speed-impaired racer doesn't have a whole lot under the hood.



▲ Teamwork is necessary to control the high-tech gadgets of the era.

ASTERIX AND OBELIX: KICK BUTTIX

This action adventure is based on a comic series that's ridiculously famous in Europe, but virtually unknown in the U.S. It stars the two titular heroes: a pair of rebellious Gauls (kind of like Vikings, only French) in 50 B.C., on a quest to free their captured friends from the forces of Julius Caesar. Like the comic book, the game pits Asterix (the little one with the winged hat) and Obelix (the big one with striped pants) against overwhelming odds in foreign lands where the most diplomatic solution to any problem is a fist to the face.

The game's visuals have the flair of the comic book: Asterix's winged hat flaps when he jumps, Obelix lumbers through hordes of Romans with pigtales swinging and enemies are swung like rag dolls and launched out of the screen with rocket uppercuts. The game uses Roman helmets as its currency, and helmets can be collected and exchanged for extra health, combos, and artwork created for the game. Players control both Asterix and Obelix during the adventure, exchanging them at set points and using one to throw switches and open doors that the other cannot reach. The term "puzzles" should be taken very lightly though, as these brain-teasers are usually simple tasks like tripping switches and igniting barrels of TNT.

Unfortunately, there is very little to do in *Asterix and Obelix*. Gameplay at first seems intent upon cloning the original *Jak & Daxter*, but falls far short. Battles are extremely repetitive, and there is almost no need to unlock special moves because basic attacks are more than adequate. Both Asterix and Obelix can walk through entire legions of soldiers merely by repeatedly tapping the punch button, and puzzles merely serve to break up the onslaught. Save your money and fight your way through a comic sale instead. DOUG TRUEMAN

PSM 5 SO-SO A bland beat 'em up that squanders years of classic comic mythology.



LEGENDS ARE BORN.

9.24.04

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PlayStation 2



N-GAGE NOKIA

ACTIVISION

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PlayStation 2



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AKkaim

HANDS ON!

Keep your heads down — the air is filled with flying data!

Nyko Air Flo Wireless

Manufacturer: Nyko
M.S.R.P.: \$39.99

Nyko's Air Flo controllers, which boast internal fans that blow air out the handles as you play, thus keeping your hands from getting sweaty, goes wireless with this latest version. Signal response is good, and there are a few other noteworthy refinements. Fan speed is adjusted with a dial now, offering precise control over air flow, and fighting game fans should also note that there are now rubber feet on the controller's underside, along with an inch-long joystick that screws into the d-pad. These turn the Air Flo into a tiny arcade stick. It's a neat idea, though its small scale compromises the idea's effectiveness somewhat.

This is all good stuff, but the Air Flo is still huge, clunky, and not very ergonomic. For instance, our index fingers consistently came to rest on the **△** and **□** buttons when first picking it up, instead



▲ The Air Flo is crazy big, but with its internal fans and grippy, rubber-coated handles, it'll stop moist mitts cold.

of the **△** and **□** buttons, and face is slightly squeezed inward, so the D-pad and face buttons are almost directly above the analog sticks — making them tougher to hit. It also takes a whopping four AA batter-

ies. Still, the Air Flo is the only controller that can compensate for sweaty hands, so if you start looking like a Gatorade commercial when the gaming gets heavy, here's your horse, cowboy. **ERIC BRATCHER**

PSM
FINAL SCORE

6

OKAY

Functionally, this is a feature-packed controller, and it'll stop your palm-sweats cold. However, if heavy secretions aren't a problem, there are better choices out there.

U.S. Robotics Wireless Gaming Adaptor and Ethernet Bridge Model 5430

Manufacturer: U.S. Robotics
M.S.R.P.: \$109.00

It's no secret that U.S. Robotics makes kick-ass PC gear, but the company is just now venturing into console territory. Basically, the 5430 is an Ethernet bridge, which means you set it next to your PS2, plug your network cable into it, and after one Emulir-style "BAM!" your PS2 is all set to connect to the internet or home LAN wirelessly (assuming, of course, that you already have a wireless router and an internet connection) at speeds of up to, and possibly exceeding, 54g. That's fast.

The 5430 is compatible with both 802.11g and 802.11b devices, and performance is solid. But \$109

is a lot of money, and the 5430 absolutely requires a wireless router. Nyko's Net Extender (PSM #81) is \$10 cheaper and, thanks to a lower-tech design (its two units plug into the network connectors on each end), works with wired routers. Lastly, we'd reallow the 5430 to have two or three inputs instead of just one, so we could hook all our systems up to one device. Ultimately though, this is a capability no other product on the market has either, so we don't want to be too harsh on the 5430. **ERIC BRATCHER**



▼ The 5430 is definitely useful, although some of its bells and whistles, like the free firewall software, aren't meant for PS2 users.

PSM
FINAL SCORE

8

VERY GOOD

The 5430 is like a relationship counselor. It'll have your PS2 and your wireless router talking lovingly to one another in no time, but bliss ain't cheap.

ROCKSTAR GAMES
PRESENTS

Grand Theft Auto San Andreas

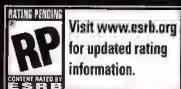


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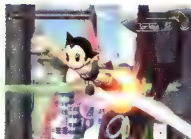
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PlayStation®2



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▲ Flying around Metro City is sort of reminiscent of another Sonic Team game: *NIGHTS Into Dreams...*



▲ The spider-like Magnamite is actually Metro City's power grid gone mad!



▲ No, that's not some warped version of Mega Man — that's Atlas with his powerful Arm Cannon.

ASTRO BOY *Sweet? Sure, but way too short*

Astro Boy fans, this isn't quite the game you've been waiting for. Sonic Team's take on Osamu Tezuka's venerable series certainly captures the series' aesthetics, but, unfortunately, the game is skewed so young that long-time fans will undoubtedly be left wanting more.

Astro Boy plays a bit like *Z.O.E.*, and this works rather well, for the most part. Flying around Metro City and bashing baddies is straightforward enough, and effectively utilizing Astro's many abilities to defeat the

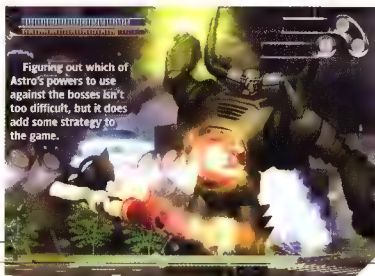
bosses gives the game some much-needed depth.

But the framerate occasionally stutters, and the camera can be problematic — especially since players can only adjust the camera horizontally, not vertically. And the all-important target-lock will occasionally refuse to lock onto nearby targets — or any targets at all.

Aside from these flaws, what proves most detrimental is just how quickly the whole affair is completed. None of the enemies — including the bosses — are particularly chal-

lenging, and the bulk of the game is easily finished in an afternoon. Gamers who compulsively collect every knickknack may be able to extend the game's lifespan by completing side quests and seeking out the 80-plus collectible cards, but

even that doesn't add much to the brief adventure. Despite the fact that some of the side quests can be quite tedious, however, they do add more variety to the game, so players should be mostly entertained for the few hours the game lasts. **JUSTIN CHENG**

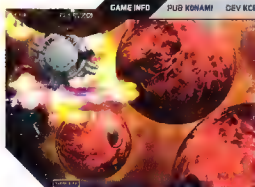


Figuring out which of Astro's powers to use against the bosses isn't too difficult, but it does add some strategy to the game.

PSM 6 OKAY
Astro Boy's latest adventure is certainly enjoyable and worth playing — especially for the diehard fans — but it's over far too quickly to warrant a purchase.



Many of the classic *Gradius* boss designs return here in one form or another, although the trademark Easter Island heads seem to have been left out.



▲ This game begs, pleads, and screams to be played with an arcade stick controller. Heed its cries — you'll score higher.



▲ Even on the easiest difficulty settings, this game will chew you up and spit out the pieces if you aren't a skilled controller jockey.

GRADIUS V
The old school is still the gold school

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE

The original *Gradius* blasted its way onto the scene back in 1985, and quickly went on to spawn not just more *Gradius* games,

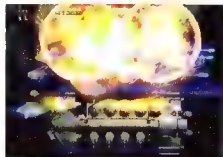
but also spin-offs in the form of the *Salamander/LifeForce* and *Parodius* series. So it was considered a success. Today, 2D, side-scrolling shooters are considered yesterday's games, but *Gradius V* still retains that same arcade-style magic that made the original so compelling.

The key to *Gradius* is its customizable power-up system. There are six types of upgrade: Speed, Missiles, Double Shot, Laser, Options, and

Shield, and most have at least two flavors; for instance, options can be arranged in several different formations. You choose your selection of weapons at the game's start, and then use power up jewels you've gathered during gameplay to selectively turn these upgrades on, or sometimes off, as the game progresses.

Everything blows up really well, too. Konami has preserved the classic, 2D action, but rendered the graphics in full, beautiful 3D. Sound design and music aren't quite *Silent Hill*-good, but they're still way up there. Two players can play simultaneously, which is nice because this is one challenging game even on the lowest difficulty settings. Finally, with a

price of only \$30, you really can't go wrong. There aren't many games out there that deliver a good arcade fix, but this is one of them. **ERIC BRATCHER**



▲ One frustrating element that has plagued this series is the "avalanche" difficulty scale. If you die, you lose all your gear, which can lead to lots more death.

PSM 8 VERY GOOD
This series is arguably the grandfather and the pinnacle of the genre; if you play only one shooter, this is the one. Plus, it's cheap!



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 **NOKIA**



▲ Aaagh! We just saw super-deformed Martha Stewart's cleavage! Bad image! Bad!



▲ The racing and gambling are only part of the game. You can also breed horses and rear them into champions.



▲ Thank you, Cleveland! For my encore, I will now tap my front, right hoof in time with *Home on the Range*. Let's rock!

GALLOP RACER 2004

Bet the farm and cheer until you're "horse"

Let's face facts — if you're even reading this review, you must have some fascination with America's guilty pleasure of horseracing. That, or you got suckered into watching Seabiscuit one too many times. Either way, you're in for a decent day at the races with Tecmo's *Gallop Racer 2004*.

Tecmo continues to enhance the franchise's visual s. The new 360-degree viewing capability showcases the incredible photo-realistic graphics,

which are a real highlight. The horses look more lifelike and the backgrounds are rich in texture and color.

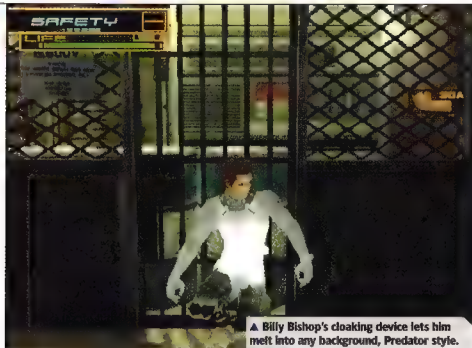
The season mode is where the fun happens. Here, players can select their own jockeys and breed and develop their own horses just like the pros do. With more than 4000 horses and nearly 40 racing track options, with variables such as weather and track conditions, there is little room for repetition and boredom. Other modes of play include the entertaining betting mode (Yay! Gambling!), battle mode

and a one-time race feature.

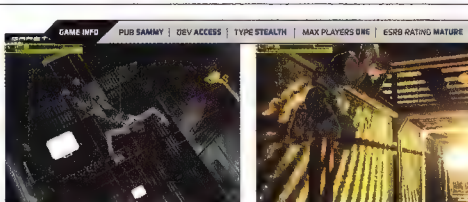
The game play is complex — who knew horses running around in circles could be so complicated? But the TRA Academy gets players accustomed to the controls and the overwhelming information that goes along with

horseracing in an informative manner.

Gallop Racer 2004 is a niche game, either you're going to love it or not. Its appeal reaches to those interested, or even curious, about horseracing. But for that select crowd, they will not be disappointed. **JOSHUA STECKER**



▲ Billy Bishop's cloaking device lets him melt into any background, Predator style.



▲ *Spy Fiction* borrows elements from some of the most memorable action movies.

▲ The Spider Grips enable you to hang from the ceiling, though you rarely really need to do so.

SPY FICTION

Slightly out of focus picture of stealth action

Spy Fiction casts the player as a covert agent trying to infiltrate a terrorist organization to prevent the release of a weapon of mass destruction. You wield a fairly typical arsenal of cool moves and spy gadgets, including mini-cameras, silenced pistols and the cool, but sadly underutilized, Spider Grips. What sets *Spy Fiction* apart, however, is the ability to mask oneself as almost any NPC in the game. In fact, knowing where and when to transform into a particular NPC is the only way to gain access to top secret areas.

What *Spy Fiction* is notably missing

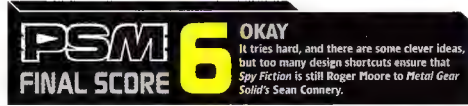
is the anxiety that should come from being alone, deep in enemy territory. This mostly comes from too many cut corners, which impact its immersiveness. Enemy soldiers all sound like and respond to the player in exactly the same manner regardless of how they're disguised, be it as a grunt, a scientist, or an insane general who recently killed two of his

comrades for sport. Players will often find themselves frisked by the same sentry three times in less than thirty seconds without once leaving the guard's line of sight. Touching any of the buttons or either of the joysticks while being searched instantly blows a player's cover. Surely a more interactive way of defeating an inspection could have been created.

Finally, despite some creative gadgets, a tendency to lift shamelessly from other sources, especially *Mission: Impossible*, make it too derivative. *Spy Fiction* has potential; it just doesn't quite realize it. **DOUG TRUEHMAN**



▲ Billy isn't the only playable character in *Spy Fiction*: there's also the lovely Sheila, who brings a tender, lady-like touch to the covert ass-kicking.



It tries hard, and there are some clever ideas, but too many design shortcuts ensure that *Spy Fiction* is still Roger Moore to *Metal Gear Solid*'s Sean Connery.

MIDWAY

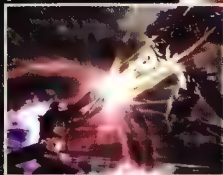
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PlayStation.2



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PSM PICKS PS2'S

TOP 10 SCARIEST GAMES!

FROM AN ONLINE OUTBREAK TO FREAKY PHOTOGRAPHY, THEY'RE GUARANTEED TO SCARE THE LIVING @\$\$! OUT OF YOU!

By The PSM Staff

D YOU LIKE SCARY VIDEOGAMES? OKAY, SO IMAGINE WE JUST SAID THAT IN THE CREEPY SCREAM GUY'S VOICE TO you over the phone. Scared yet? No? You will be, because we've done our duty, with Halloween right around the corner (or is that some freaky monster? Yikes!) to scare up our first-ever countdown of PS2's most bone-chilling games. These are the ones that'll give you nightmares (no, not the

DRIVER kind — those are scarier). They'll have you playing *DDR* with the lights on, they're so unnerving.

So whether you're a diehard fright fan, or are just getting into this type of game, you really can't go wrong with any of our spine-tingling selections. Just remember: we can't be held responsible for any psychological trauma that results from playing them, and you're on your own if you run out of fresh underwear.

You've been warned — now, let's see which games made the "cut." Meh, heh, heh, heh...

10 Resident Evil Outbreak

FROM: CAPCOM

The series that gave birth to the Survival Horror genre has lost some of its edge over the years (who can forget when the zombie dogs crashed through the mansion windows in the first game?) but by taking it online, and introducing team play, Capcom has managed to resurrect some of that old black magic. *RE Outbreak's* chills come in several forms. There's the fact that you're constantly heading towards becoming a zombie yourself. There's the real time inventory system, meaning you're never given a break from the undead onslaught. Then there's the unintentionally scary lag introduced when playing online, which can lead to you entering a room and having nasty brain-eaters pop up right in front of you. If the regular *RE* games are a two out of 10 on the fright chart, this one's a five.

(11)



9

Ghosthunter

FROM NAMCO

It's one thing to play with Sam Raimi's *Land of the Dead*, but it's another thing to play a game that has creature designs as freaky as *Ghosthunter*'s. I can't think of any other game that gets extra credit for managing to throw such interesting kills as giant spider ladybugs and ghosts of Elvis into the mix, while keeping the pace that makes other horror games seem like snooze-fests in comparison. That's why it's not just the right mix of Hollywood story, action, and presentation to keep your hands glued to the controller from start to satisfying finish.



7

Siren

FROM: SONY CEA

More than anything, it's the concept that friends and family members could potentially be turned into undead monsters that makes this game so damn creepy. As a game, it definitely has problems, but the atmosphere, helped largely by a lack of a traditional hand-holding map and the use of psychic powers to see through the eyes of the monsters, is truly something to be appreciated. Being responsible for the safety of others and constantly switching to the role of other characters at different points in the story also helps to keep the frights fresh and varied.



5

Fatal Frame

FROM: TEBE

It's one thing to be a boring LARPS episode or an incoherent rant, but to be a powerless young girl trapped with a horde of very angry ghosts, with a slinkin' camera as your only weapon when the freakiness starts going down? Now that's scary. This game still creeps as hell with its constant questions of "did I just see something move?" the incredibly creepy locations, and the downright pants-wettingly "freaky faces of the ghouls as you attempt to 'attack' them using your camera's viewfinder. Now smile and say 'Yaaaaaaah!' for the camera.



8

Manhunt

FROM: ROCKSTAR

Okay, so it's not the greatest game on PS2. Heck, it doesn't even have any ghosts — or anything supernatural, for that matter — in it. With *Manhunt*, Rockstar North did manage to pull all the right strings to get our pulses racing. From the gruesome killing moves and sadistic "director" overseeing his own private snuff film, to the relentless pursuit of the various gangs on your character's trail, this game definitely has the right atmosphere to instill fear. It gets boring all too quickly, but if you're after some chills of a completely different sort, *Manhunt* serves them up nice and bloody.



6

Clocktower 3

FROM: CAPCOM

This simple spook-tacular made its way onto our list because of its unique premise: you're not a hero out to kick some supernatural rump, but rather a young girl who spends most of the time running away from danger — much like Scooby and Shaggy (or most of us would, in real life). There's lots of it, too, in the form:



various serial killer rant-a-pieces, not to mention the three especially nightmare-inducing freak who tries to off you with insecticide. Constant thoughts of "where is he?" and "where can I hide?" help keep you on the edge of your seat, and your palms sweating as you do your best to run away like the very best horror movie actresses.

4

The Suffering

FROM: MIDWAY

Between the voices in your head, the visceral violence, and the wickedly sado-masochistic enemy designs, this one really shreds your nerves. It's a great premise, too: you're trapped inside a haunted prison. With all of the twisted things done to and by its deceased inmates, you can imagine (if you dare!) the kind of sick situations that you find yourself confronted with. Toss in some great gameplay, solid control, and tons of atmosphere and you have the single best action-horror game on PS2 — severed hands-down.



3

SILENT HILL 3

FROM: KONAMI

The premiere survival horror series on PS2 continues with this, its best-looking entry yet. It boasts the same near-perfect mix of awesome graphics, amazing sound and music, and "what the hell?" creature designs as *Silent Hill 2*, but the story gets a little too outlandish even for this series. This makes it slightly less terrifying than its predecessor, but still one crazy creep-fest from a studio that knows how to make you squirm. It's got a lot of cool, skewed, marks to solve, together control and serious firearms, and the game is a pretty good example of a survival horror game that's not just a game.



1

Fatal Frame 2

FROM: TEGACO

Games ahead of this one in terms of overall fear factor, but not us. It takes the premise of the first game: a young girl assaulted by spirits and her brother, who are deeply about one another, and one of whom is destined to fall victim to an ancient curse upon which they've stumbled in a strange, twisted world. The game is a pretty good example of a survival horror game that's not just a game. It's got a lot of cool, skewed, marks to solve, together control and serious firearms, and the game is a pretty good example of a survival horror game that's not just a game.



2

SILENT HILL 2

FROM: KONAMI

This psychological horror masterwork has it all: great graphics, fantastic audio including a soundtrack that is second to none, a wide range of macabre meat monsters to bludgeon, and a great hook: the main character has just received a letter from his dead wife, telling him to meet her in Silent Hill. Now if that's not disturbing on multiple levels, we don't know what is. Well, the eerie static that's produced by your radio as monsters approach in the mist is definitely up there, too. If you can get through the 20-minute fog jog at the beginning, this game will warp your mind. Not just while you're playing it, but for weeks and months to come. We still hate to go outside on foggy days...



SKIN-DEEP SCARES

Sure, PS2 has other series rooted in horror, but the ones that are scariest are the ones that are the most scary. Here's a look...



ONIMUSHA SERIES

Okay... you're a samurai (or a French guy, in part three) fighting hordes of demons, monsters, and the resurrected general Nobunaga — but for some reason we can't really peg down, these games have never produced any real frights outside of its gore-filled, masterfully directed CG sights.



CASTLEVANIA SERIES

You'd think that a series featuring Dracula, zombies, skeleton warriors, giant floating eyeballs... pretty much every sort of creepy creature you can imagine would be scarier. Maybe the fact that your character is always such a fearless bad ass and not some freaked-out guy or gal has something to do with it?

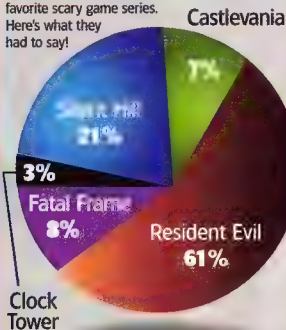


DEVIL MAY CRY SERIES

Gothic settings, living (killing) puppets, and a main character who is, himself, half-demon... this series has "scary" written all over it on paper. Once again, though, we can only chalk up its lack of spookiness to the sheer coolness of its main character. You just can't get scared playing as the bad ass Dante.

READERS' SCARIEST SERIES

PSM readers visiting our website at www.psmonline.com were asked to vote for their favorite scary game series. Here's what they had to say!



STEVE DYBSKY

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Played for 16 teams and won world series twice.

U.S. Army Private First Class 9/4/04 - 9/6/04
Stormed the beach at Normandy as well as Guadalcanal. Disposed of 837 enemy soldiers, was fragged 38 times.

Grand Prix Race Car Driver 9/6/04 - 9/8/04
Drove 12 different cars and survived 132 crashes. Won races on 10 different courses around the world.

Professional Volleyball Player 9/8/04 - 9/12/04
Won the Pro Beach Volleyball Championship as both man and woman.

Secret Agent 9/12/04 - 9/15/04
Infiltrated evil genius's compound. Neutralized 17 plutonium bombs. Saved world 7 times.

Western Gunslinger 9/15/04 - 9/16/04
Defeated all young and old guns offering challenge. Died only 8 times.

Alien Menace 9/16/04 - 9/21/04
Crushed 5 galaxies and subjugated 29 separate intelligent life forms.

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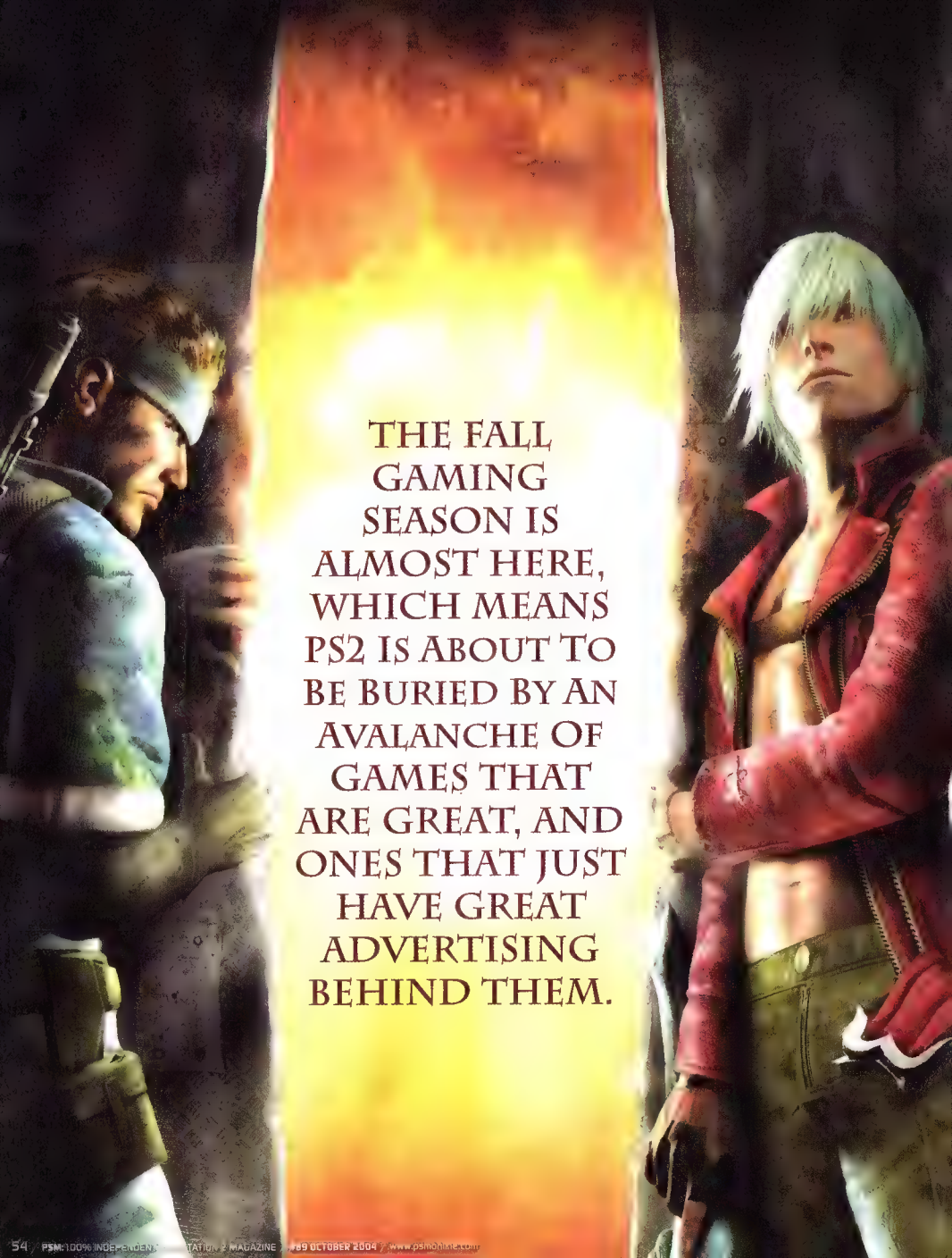
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THE FALL
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SEASON IS
ALMOST HERE,
WHICH MEANS
PS2 IS ABOUT TO
BE BURIED BY AN
AVALANCHE OF
GAMES THAT
ARE GREAT, AND
ONES THAT JUST
HAVE GREAT
ADVERTISING
BEHIND THEM.

PSM'S FALL GAME PREVIEW 2004

There's one incredibly tasty batch of games coming this fall, including some of the most hotly anticipated titles of the last couple of years.

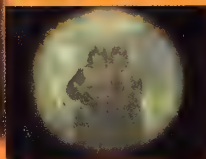
And sure, the likes of *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, *GTA: San Andreas*, and *Gran Turismo 4* are going to rock, but even smaller games like Capcom's *Shadow of Rome* or Namco's *Ace Combat 5* are coming out looking like gang-busters. Relatively new series continue to hum right along with new installments (*Jak 3*, *Prince of*

Persia 2), while some old favorites get a new lease on life (*Mortal Kombat: Deception*).

Actually, no matter what your preferred style of game, from platform action, to first-person shooters, to fighting, to RPGs, there's bound to be something headed your way worth drooling over in anticipation. In fact, it's fair to say this is the strongest holiday lineup PS2 owners have had to look forward to since, well, maybe ever... with nary a lump of coal in the bunch.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

BY JEFF LUNDRIGAN



He never saw it coming.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

WELA'S FIVE LOWDOWNS

The next chapter in Konami's flagship series, *Snake Eater* is actually a prequel. In 1967, Solid Snake (or maybe not Solid Snake — the very notion of Identity is purposefully kept a bit loose here) is sent deep into the Soviet Union to track a scientist developing a new kind of nuclear weapon. Like previous *Metal Gear* games, the

of camouflage. As a result, the environments are mostly outdoors, breaking the series out of natural locations. What's more, Snake can pull in elements of his surroundings, like leaves and brush, to more effectively blend in and get the drop on feckless enemies with a wealth

human shields

of (odd) new feature: eating. To keep his strength up, Snake has to eat. This actually isn't forced to eat... well, snakes... also lizards, birds, insects — pretty much anything that walks, crawls or slithers or is fair game, I'd say.

WELA'S FIVE LOWDOWNS

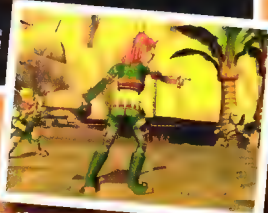
with good reason. Since this is theoretically the last in the series, designer Hideo Kojima is really pulling out all the stops to send it off with a bang. In addition to all the new



► Our heroes will take to the unfriendly skies in *Jak 3*!



► Daxter lends a hand... and a gun!



JAK 3

Naughty Dog / **PLAYSTATION 3** / November 23

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Since the events of *Jak and Daxter*, our heroes have been on the run, but now they work their way back into Haven City, which has been wrecked by the Metalheads, humans, and Krimzon Guard (warning: for control).

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

It's a sequel to a game that was a critical and commercial success, and it's a sequel to a game that was a critical and commercial success.



▼ Gee, we hope Jak's insurance is paid up.



▲ Each level has a distinctive look.



BLASTS FROM THE PAST

What's old is new again — and still damn fun — this fall, with the release of two sizzling retro packs, well, packed with some of the greatest console and arcade classics ever to hit an arcade or TV screen.



MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 2

Publisher: **Midway** / Developer: **Digital Eclipse** / Release Date: **October 11**

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

The latest from Midway's Vault 'o Classics reads like a Who's Who of some of the biggest quarter crunchers from the 80s and 90s: *A.P.B.*, *Arch Rivals*, *Championship Sprint*, *Cyberball 2072*, *Gauntlet 2*, *Hard Drivin'*, *Mortal Kombat I, II, and III*, *NARC*, *Pit Fighter*, *Primal Rage*, *Rampage World Tour*, *Spy Hunter 2*, *Steel Talons*, *STUN Runner*, *Timber*, *Total Carnage*, *Wizard of War*, *Xenophobe*, and *Xybots*. Plus, you get nifty bonuses like the original commercials and "making of" videos.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

A classic gamer's wet dream.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION PLUS

Publisher: **Sega** / Developer: **Sonic Team** / Release: **November 16**

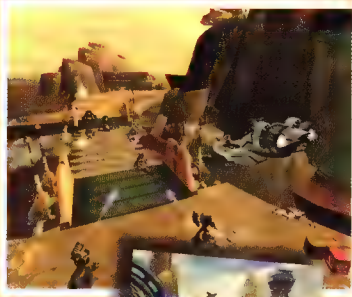
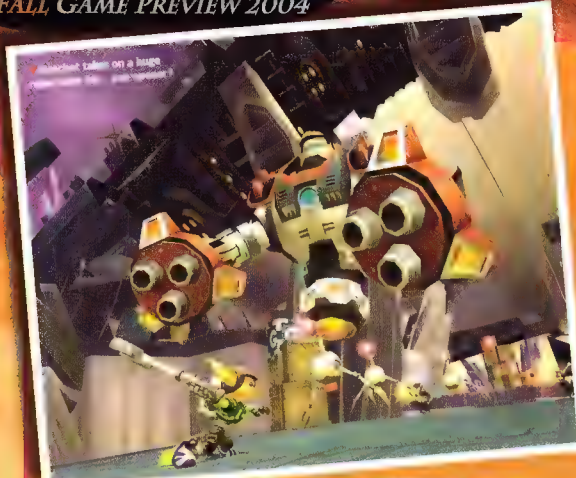


WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

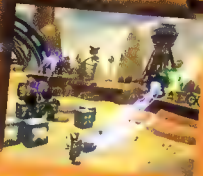
This offers the same lineup as *Sonic Mega Collection*, released for GameCube a couple of years ago: *Sonic the Hedgehog*, 1, 2, and 3, *Sonic and Knuckles*, *Sonic Spinball*, *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine*, and *Sonic 3D: Blast*, along with some hidden goodies. The "Plus" includes *Comix Zone* and *The Ooze*, two games which never made into the GameCube version. Sadly, *Sonic CD* still isn't included.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

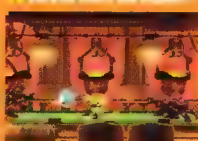
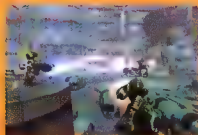
If you love *The Hedgehog* (and many of us still do), then obviously this is a must have.



▲ You can expect all types of enemies hunting for your skin in *Up Your Arsenal*.



RATCHET & CLANK: UP YOUR ARSENAL



WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Much like *Jak and Daxter*, *Ratchet & Clank* just keeps getting bigger and better. It seems the duo are happily basking in celebrity, stars of their own TV show, when they get word that Ratchet's home world has been invaded by the evil Dr. Nefarious and his army of Tyhranoids. The one person who can help? Why, none other than Captain Qwark.

Pushing the series envelope to its limits, *Up Your Arsenal* offers a ridiculous selection of 20 new weapons for the duo, which gives enemies a virus that causes them to kill each other. The real excitement, though, is *Up Your Arsenal*'s brand-spanking new online play modes, which include deathmatches, capture the flag, and the

cool-as-heck looking Siege mode, in which two teams attempt to storm and penetrate each other's fortresses.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Reportedly, Insomniac began working on the online modes months before they even started work on the single-player game. Obviously, they really want to get it right, and it's looking like they may have just nailed it. But even without the ambitious new online features, *Up Your Arsenal*'s expanded lineup of weapons, characters, and never-a-serious-moment gameplay would put it on the hot list.

ACE COMBAT 5: THE UNSUNG WAR

Publisher: Namco / Developer: Namco Release Date: October 25

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Namco's deservedly beloved flight combat series is due for a facelift this fall, even though it's always been pretty gorgeous to begin with. The 50 or so aircraft in its roster are even more detailed and faithful to their real-world counterparts than before, all the explosions and other special effects have been beefed up considerably, and for the first time ever, the game's cutscenes are presented as 3D FMVs.

On the gameplay end, *Ace Combat 5* offers 30 missions and several new features, including real-time weather effects, and AI wingmen you can bark orders to through your gamepad.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Although it doesn't exactly have a lot of competition, *Ace Combat* has traditionally been the pinnacle of console flight games. This latest entry is so pretty it'll make you cry, and will almost certainly have the gameplay chops to back it up.



▲▲ Along with hot air to air combat, you can also expect to make lots of take-offs, landings, and some tricky mid-air refuellings!



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GRAN TURISMO 4

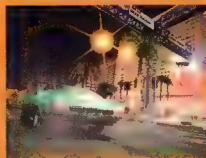
PlayStation 2 / November 14

What do you expect? The single most popular racing game on any platform ever comes screaming back to the PS2 this fall, with a lineup of over 100 cars, over 100 courses set in eight different locations.

One of new features

good idea — oh, who are we kidding? It's what every armchair car nut has been trembling for. Plus, online you'll get chat and message boards so you can share your automotive addiction with other bliss around the world.

With over 35 million copies sold worldwide, *Gran Turismo* continues to be a powerhouse franchise, and admit it, the idea of online play is making you drool all over this page right now, right?



MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

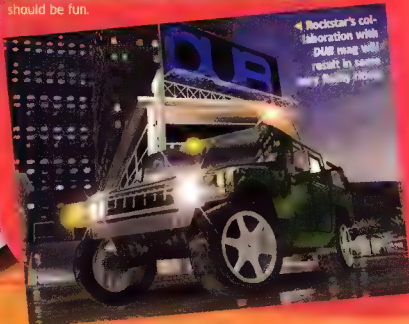
Rockstar Games / Developer: Rockstar San Diego
November 23

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Rockstar has partnered up with the magazine for car customization fanatics, *DUB*, but the game's features are a strange mix. Rockstar promises over 50 vehicles, more than 100 sports cars, 30 modifications, and offers a variety of mods in detail, paint and customize them. The game also allows you to buy and customize cars and parts, and you can even buy and customize cars and parts. So go ahead, you're ready to — then just try to keep them from getting stretched. Success! Besides, the game's online play is a real thing, and it should offer online racing for up to seven players.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

A custom car nut's sweetest dream and worst nightmare — should be fun.



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Publisher: Electronic Arts / Developer: Black Box Studios /
Release Date: November 17

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

NFSU2 builds off its successful predecessor in some rather impressive ways, plunging deep into the savage heart of tuner culture. To begin with, the game is set in a sprawling, highly detailed city of neighborhoods and freeways, which you're free to roam around at will, driving anywhere you feel like, at any time (as long as it's at night). By finding — and of course winning — illegal street races, you earn money to buy new cars and tune them to a ridiculous degree, and the game offers over 30 licensed cars and hundreds of licensed after market car parts to modify them with.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Sure to cause a serious case of *The Fast and the Furious* flashbacks, this one looks like a corker for sure.

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- ◆ New VS Challenge Mode and Tactics system
- ◆ Bonus Archives with rare Dynasty Warriors artwork



Mild Language
Violence

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PlayStation 2





GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

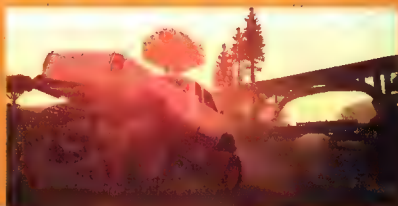
Rockstar Games / Rockstar North / GTA:SA / October 19

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Rockstar's infamous series is prepping for a triumphant return this fall, and it looks like it's gonna be a monster. Set during the gangbanging heyday of the early 90s, *GTA: SA* follows Carl "CJ" Johnson on a bloody path of revenge. When his mother is murdered and a pair of crooked cops frame him for homicide, CJ is forced back into taking over the Orange Grove Families street gang, and things sort of get worse from there.

Set in the fictional state of San Andreas (patterned after California), *GTA: SA* ups cities and the miles and miles of highway in between, making it more than three times bigger than Vice City. In addition, Rockstar has added a new attribute system, so CJ's behavior affects his performance and how other characters react to him — work out in the gym, and he gets stronger; eat

right, apparently), and recruit gang members for missions. There's also an more in depth hand-to-hand fight system, a ton of mini-games, dozens of vehicles, and tie-ins and references to previous *GTA* games (Frank



WHAT'S THE GUTZ?

Unless you've been living under a rock, you have to know this is one of the most ferociously anticipated titles for this fall, and rightly so.



▼ POP2 brings most realism to the
demon hack-n-slash genre.



► The emphasis here is on action, but there will still be
plenty of adventuring to be done.



PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Prince of Persia: Sands of Time was one of those games that sort of surprised everyone with just how good it really was. Well, a slightly older, slightly grimmer, slightly deadlier Prince is coming back, and

to avoid dying in the first game, and sent an unstoppable killer called the Dahaka to make sure the job is done right this time. So The Prince flees the

several hundred years of time to change his destiny.

Most notable is the new "Free Form Fighting" system that enables you to string together long chains of moves in practically any combination — all while (hopefully anyway) retaining the fluid animation and smooth transitions between moves from the original. The Prince can also transport himself to the past, and his actions there affect the timeline and change things in the present to help overcome obstacles.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Although they're altering the formula a bit to emphasize the combat, hopefully it won't be altered so far as to make it just another beat-'em-up.

just what made the original *Sands of Time* so successful, and clearly want to

SHADOW OF ROME

Publisher: Capcom / Developer: Capcom / Release Date: November 2

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

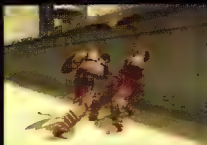
Former *Animusha* guru Keiji Inafune sets his sights on a new historical setting, ancient Rome. After the murder of Julius Caesar, soldier Agrippa finds his father accused of the crime. With the help of his friend Octavianus, Agrippa then sets out to clear his father's name. Players switch between warrior Agrippa and the more stealthy Octavianus as they search out the real murderer through the faithfully represented city of Rome (or at least a vaguely Hollywood-ized, 3D facsimile thereof). Gladiatorial combat, chariot races, stealth, disguise, and adventure game puzzles round out the action.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

This is one of those occasional Capcom games that's specifically designed for release in the U.S. and Europe. It sure looks pretty, and if the gameplay can be balanced right, it ought to be worth a look. No... Must resist... Pull... too strong... "Hey son, you like games about gladiators?"



▲▲▲ If you want blood, well, *Shadow of Rome's* got it... by the bucket!





At least we won't have to hear "that darn 'And my son!' line again."

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE

Electronic Arts / Developer: Electronic Arts / November 2

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

It's a hard decision. Are you really going to play a game that's a further away from the book and film series as it does parallel them, offering a new set of characters and events in a sort of "what-if" story line? To explain, we begin with Boromir, a Gondorian guard sent on a mission to Rivendell to find Boromir. When it seems Boromir has already been with the Fellowship, Beornir suggests we join him. Along the way, he picks up a band of adventures of his own while leading the Fellowship, and we learn from the game's plot.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Of all the games, it's a hard one to pick. It's a game that's a further away from the book and film series as it does parallel them, offering a new set of characters and events in a sort of "what-if" story line? To explain, we begin with Boromir, a Gondorian guard sent on a mission to Rivendell to find Boromir. When it seems Boromir has already been with the Fellowship, Beornir suggests we join him. Along the way, he picks up a band of adventures of his own while leading the Fellowship, and we learn from the game's plot.



Now you can explore Middle-Earth all you want.



SUIIKODEN IV

Publisher: Konami / Developer: Konami / Release Date: November 16

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

This latest entry in Konami's venerable and much loved RPG series is based once again on the classic Chinese tale 108 Stars of Destiny. *Suiikoden IV* follows Tal, a young knight in training who obtains the Rune of Punishment, which subsequently kicks off further adventures. *Suiikoden IV* is pushing in some interesting new directions, like the inclusion of base building and ship-to-ship combat, while also bringing back a number of characters from previous games, like Jeanne. The final game should feature dozens of playable characters — and for the first time features voice acting throughout for many of them — as well as a suitably sprawling world for them to run around.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

This is one series that just keeps chugging away and has never been less than great. Plus, you really can't go wrong with ship-to-ship battles.



X-MEN LEGENDS

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

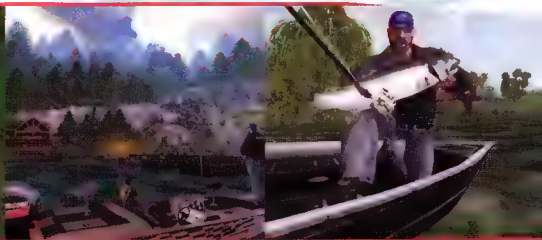
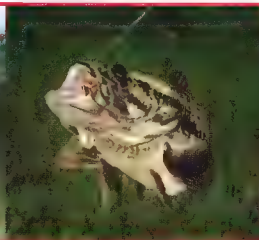
It's one's been in development for quite a while, but it looks like the wait was well worth it. A superhero action RPG, *Legends* blends elements from the *X-Men* comics, movies, and TV show into its own.

be more than one solution to any given puzzle: do you have Wolverine slice Nightcrawler? Bam! past them!

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

X-Men fans, and it shows in the way this is shaping up nicely.

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PlayStation 2

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DEVIL MAY CRY 3

December 7

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Yet another prequel (what is it with prequels these days?), *DMC3* shows just how Dante became the Dante he is today. It also introduces us to his previously unmentioned twin brother, Virgil, who obviously graduated from the venerable Evil Twin Academy. It would seem Virgil is rather more in touch with his kick ass demon side than Dante, and shows up at Dante's detective agency (actually, Virgil goes ahead and materializes in a tower across the street, but never mind), bringing a horde of minions with him and calling his brother out. Dante, unaware at this time he even had demon abilities, is more than a little peeved.

However, that ignorance of his powers also forms the basis of much of what's different about this third entry. As the game progresses, through the use of the "My Dante" system, players slowly add to and improve Dante's powers and skills in several classes: Gunslinger (long range attacks), Sword Master (close range), Royal Guard (defense), and Trickster (jumps and speed). The game's graphic engine has been rebuilt from the ground up, not only increasing the level of detail but also the sheer number of enemies that can be on screen at once, not to mention making every move and animation appreciably faster. Capcom has also moved away from

it just kept you from knowing where the hell enemies were coming from — and has set *DMC3* within much tighter enclosed spaces.

DMC3 also throws in at least a couple of other new characters, a "mysterious man" named Arkham, and a female demon hunter named Lady, who apparently has the half-demon Dante on her hit list.

WHAT'S THE FLOW?

After a disappointing first sequel, Capcom appears to have taken those criticisms to heart and set about trying to recapture what made the original such cool, hard-hitting B.O.B.



What's Devil May Cry without all those super-cool moves?



▲ Draw your pistols or throw your sword — it all depends on which combat style you choose.



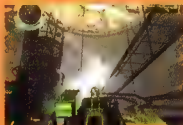
SNOWBLIND

Blood & Thunder: Crystal Dynamics / EA / January 2

WOLVES ARE HOWLING

Snowblind originally began life as Deus Ex: Clan Wars, an action title set

in the future, it casts you in the role of a soldier fighting in a civil war in China, and includes squad-based dynamics into its first-person combat.



The environments are suitably gritty and metallic.



Space is apparently pretty quick. Many of the environments include destructible features, and there are even small mechs, called spiderbots, for you to pilot. The game is said to include an arsenal of 24 upgradeable weapons, but the coolest part is obviously the bio-enhancements, which include sundry things like mirrored vision, but also some tasty talents like throwing electrical blasts and slowing time.

It's Kill or be killed in the near future.



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MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

PlayStation 2, Xbox, PC, Game Boy Advance, October 1

WHAT'S THE WHAT?

Well, it had to happen sooner or later, and after a two-year absence, *Kombat* returns. *Deception* is breaking some interesting new ground though. It adds *Dead or Alive* 2-style multi-tiered environments (so you can kick opponents out of windows onto a lower level, for example), a scattering of deadly traps around most levels (for throwing opponents into spinning blades or crushing metal plates) and maybe a weapon or two blundered down. Besides the *Kombat*, there are also three new play modes: *Konquest* mode (like an adventure game, only more violent), *Chess Kombat* (like chess, only more violent), and *Puzzle Kombat* (like *Puzzle Fighter*, only more violent). You can also expect plenty of returning characters, lots of new Fatalities, and more violence. Oh, and we can't forget... online play!

Two years ago, this *Deadly Alliance* showed there was still some life in the franchise after all, and with its new modes, *Deception* should probably have some legs as well.



► That's gotta hurt! We're sorry, but we just had to say that...



You can expect all kinds of gory, horrifying fatalities.



WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW

Publisher: THQ / Developer: Yuke's / Release Date: November 9

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

THQ's yearly *WWE SmackDown* release improves a bit over 2003's mat-pounder *Bring on the Pain* with a graphical overhaul that ups the polygon count and texture detail. While bringing back every play mode from last year (First Blood, Slobber Knocker, etc.), *SmackDown! vs. Raw* also offers a tweaked career mode that hopefully smoothes out some of the problems from last year. Otherwise, THQ and Yuke's are keeping viciously tight-lipped about any other features that may or may not be included, although the strong hint is that they may be adding online play.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

For the wrestling fanatic, THQ's *SmackDown* franchise has consistently been among the best of the bunch — really, you can't go wrong here.

RUMBLE ROSES

Konami PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance, October 16

WHAT'S THE WHAT?

A non-all-female wrestling game was inevitable. That it would include a mud wrestling mode was also inevitable. At least they're not bothering to be subtle about it — in fact, the honesty is kinda refreshing (even Konami boasts about its characters being "modeled in revealing bikinis" and how you can "humiliate" your foes by "placing them in compromising positions"). For the record, the game features a roster of 11 babbling babes, alternate costumes via a face/heel system, a "hands free" mode (snicker), and from what we've seen does boast some pretty impressive, um, mud physics.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Oh come on, you knew you were probably gonna at least rent this one the minute you saw it on the store shelves, didn't you?



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PAIN AND SUFFERING

WELCOME

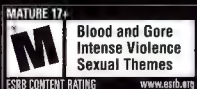
SILENT HILL 4 THE ROOM

Yes, it's a horror game.

It's a horror game.

It's a horror game.

It's a horror game.



PlayStation 2



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GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

Electronic Arts / Developer: EA Los Angeles / November 15

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Well, aside from being a first-person shooter set in the James Bond universe, this actually has nothing to do with the N64 classic *GoldenEye*.

Looking for a way to stretch its Bond license, EA has crafted a totally new story and lead character. As a non-Bond M16 "00" agent, you're expelled from the service for being evil. Teaming up with Auric Goldfinger, you lose an eye in his war against Dr. No, which is then replaced by a synthetic golden eye—hence the title.

Okay, so EA is being a bit deceptive here. Nonetheless, they assembled an impressive group of developers, pulling people from Bungie, Konami, and Ubi Soft's *Splinter Cell* team. Game modes include online play, and the developers are putting a lot of work into enemy AI.

Why does

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Early demos suffered some frame rate problems, but there appears to be one heck of a lot of style here, so let's hope the substance shapes up.



You'll have access to all manner of wonderful guns.

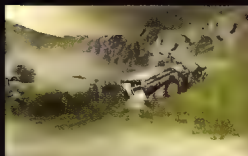


The AI's going to be tough... you have to be tougher!



Happiness is having the baddest armored vehicle on your block!

Whether you're out in the open or taking cover behind an APC, you can expect lots of action.



KILLZONE

Publisher: SCEA / Developer: Guerilla Games / Release Date: October 26

WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN?

Sony has long been touting *Killzone* as the PS2's answer to *Halo*, and it sure has been in development for a while. Set in the distant future when humans are colonizing the galaxy, a splinter group of fanatics known as the Helghast launch a surprise attack on the Earth-based ISA.

The game has looked gorgeous since Sony gave everyone their first glimpse, and just keeps getting prettier. The game features both indoor and outdoor environments in a wide variety of locales, from lush jungles to blasted cities, and boasts some nifty fog, fire, and other special effects. Enemy AI seems fairly smart, with Helghast working together throughout the 26 single-player missions, but the game will offer a number of online play modes as well.



Reach out, reach out and touch someone.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

This one's been a long time coming, but has consistently impressed those who play it. *Halo* killer or no, it's a goodie.

THE RED STAR

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PlayStation 2



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HOT GAMES

Turn on over to these big games NOW!



Backyard wrestling 2 pg. 78



Def Jam 2 pg. 80



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles pg. 79



◀ See how small that car is? To think, your ball can get many times bigger than what's shown in this screen!

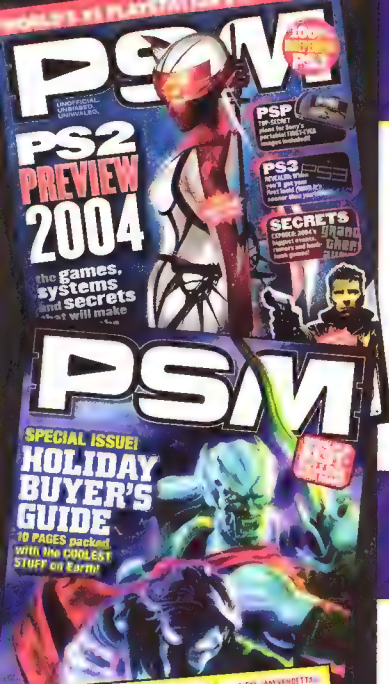
KATAMARI DAMACY

A big, sticky ball of pure soul

At one time, the Japanese dominated the games industry, but they have since fallen behind in realizing what gamers — particularly American ones — long for. What we've seen instead are old, clichéd ideas rehearsed a countless number of times. A minor gaming recession hasn't helped to foster any new, innovative ideas either. We were losing faith in the Japanese to develop their signature quirky games that emphasized creativity over flashy visuals



▶ You start with a bare ball roughly the size of your own awkwardly shaped body.



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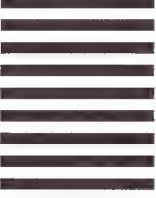
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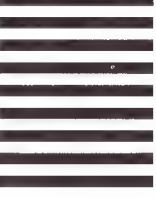
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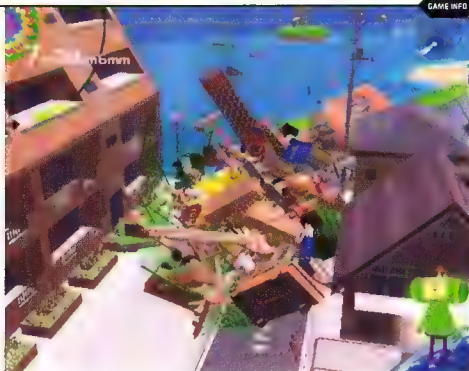
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<< KATAMARI DAMACY IS A DELIGHT TO BEHOLD IN ANY CONTEXT >>

GAME INFO | PUB NAMED HOMETEX | DEV NAMICO | TYPE PUZZLE | REL DATE SEPTEMBER | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB RATING PENDING



▲ The bigger your katamari becomes, the more difficult it is to maneuver around. Also, as it gets physically bigger, you have to take into account a level's physical design.

Katamari Damacy is a game whose core concept is so simple that a written description of it would almost be a turn-off. Simply put, you roll a sticky ball around while it picks up objects. The bigger you can make your ball, the better. Doesn't sound too impressive, does it? Despite the blunt description, *Katamari* is one of the most original, innovative, and fun games we've ever played.

The story goes something like this: you are the Prince of the Cosmos. Your psychedelic jester of a dad performed the ultimate party foul by knocking the stars out of the sky. As his obedient son, it's your job to put the stars back in the skies. This is done by rolling a ball around and collecting objects to make your "katamari" or clump, bigger. As your katamari grows in size, so does its ability to pick up larger objects.

The dual-analog controls — similar to controlling tank treads — are simple, but nevertheless take some time to get used to. Also, the game's physics feel spot-on; you really get the sensation that you are pushing a giant mound of... stuff around the game's environments. Objects that jut out of your ball even cause it to roll lopsided.

Featuring some of the most refreshing visuals we've seen in years, *Katamari*'s in-game graphics are deceptively simple — everything is flat-shaded and blocky. Even Lego humans have more curves than those found in the game. But this simple, stylish aesthetic is what gives the game a lot of its charm. And let's not forget the kaleidoscopic color scheme

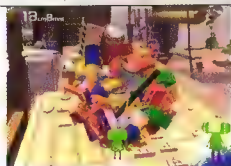
and mind-bending character design. Just look at the king, for Pete's sake!

Not to be outdone by the ingenious graphics is the brilliant soundtrack. Specifically written for the title, the songs in the game (yes, they have lyrics!) will actually reference the game itself. Undeniably catchy and full of character, *Katamari* has a truly unique and joyful score.

As Japanese as they get, *Katamari*



▲ Later in the game, your ball simply starts out bigger allowing you to pick up larger objects from the start.



▲ The items you pick up can be viewed later in a sorted gallery.



▲ No object is safe from your snowballing addiction, including live animals.



▲ Prize boxes throughout the levels contain new clothing, like this fresh outfit.

Damacy is a delight to behold in any context with its original art and sound, and concept so bizarre and clever it feels natural. This title alone has given us hope not only in Japanese game design, but innovative game design as a whole. KAISER HWANG



THE BUZZ
Gameplay and design make a glorious comeback in this highly original title.



▲ This is the current size of your katamari. Bigger is always better.

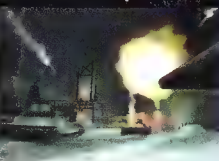
► Somewhere under here, your character is pushing this large, large clump of junk.

▼ You can even pick up humans, like this angular guy here. Fun stuff.

PSM BREAKDOWN An up-close look at the game in action

TANKS!

Finest Hour will have tanks and other vehicles, making you a force to be reckoned with. Expect more than just on-rail sequences; you'll get to command Shermans and T-34s, as well as other vehicles, to both transport you into action and provide you with the firepower to blow the Nazis away.



Blow away the Germans from the comfort of your own tank.

The hit PC title, *Call of Duty*, is finally making its way to the PlayStation 2 — not in the form of a port, as would be expected, but in a unique campaign that will span the cross section of World War II. The action will play from the perspective of ordinary soldiers while they perform extraordinary acts that videogame characters tend to do during times of war.

Call of Duty: Finest Hour does not limit gamers to just one allied power in battle, nor does it stick to just one location. Players will progress through the game experiencing battle from the Russian, British and American sides. The locations are equally diverse,



You can use the German's own weapons, like this MP40.

CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

World War II ain't over just yet

spanning the Eastern and Western reaches of Europe, and also venturing south to North Africa.

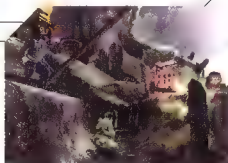
As you play through each of these locales, you will certainly have specific objectives to fulfill; unlike other similarly-themed titles, however, you will find yourself working within a

squad rather than tackling challenges alone. Cooperation — even with your AI-controlled allies — is the key to an Allied victory.

With the experience of both the *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* PC franchises, developer Spark Unlimited has enough WWII know-how to pour

into this game and make it something truly special. Continuing with the ever-popular trend of vehicular combat, *Finest Hour* will have a range of controllable vehicles, including U.S. Sherman tanks and Soviet T-34s. While it is still too early to tell how this feature will play out in the game, you can expect a combination of both on-rails and free-roaming segments.

While this should not deter any opinions, early looks at some of the levels bring to mind a number of recent movies; the Russian cinematics and levels in particular scream out *Enemy at the Gates* — and they are even



▲ After the Germans arrived, it was apparent that Stalingrad could use some urban renewal.

played in parts by a female Russian sniper, just like in the film.

The influence is great, but we can hope that the developers will get even more inspiration after watching some of the older World War II movies as well to make the scenarios a little more varied.

If the world of console gaming were the beaches of Normandy, then D-Day would be upon us. Invasion is expected to be — weather and coding permitting — a day in November. After *Call of Duty* made such an impact on PC gamers, Spark Unlimited realized that they needed to create an entirely new experience for the consoles, and the end result may just be their finest hour, indeed. **EMID BURNS**



▲ There wasn't much time to stand around on the Russian front.



The PC game was heralded by some as Game of the Year. Not a bad starting point, eh?

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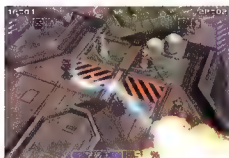
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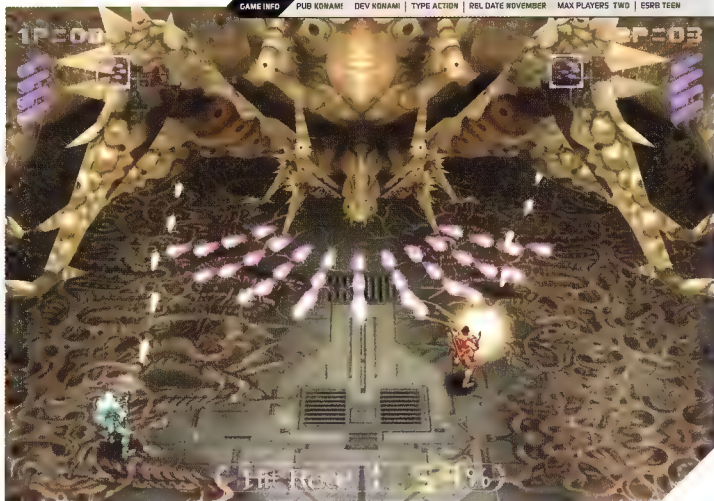
▲ The heroes of *Neo Contra*, Bill and Jaguar, are primed for some old school action.



▲ The lightning gun is just one of the weapons that can lock onto those annoying aerial enemies.

Contra, the game series that defines "hardcore" and "old school," is back, but with a new school twist. Don't worry — the game is as hardcore as ever; but *Neo Contra* isn't the same side-scrolling shooter as its prequel.

Change can be a good thing, however, and in *Neo Contra's* case, this certainly rings true. Granted, the PSOne games tried and failed to pull the series in a different direction, but *Neo Contra* is by no means a repetition of past blunders. After all, just look at *Contra: Shattered Soldier* — a next generation *Contra* game that impressed many of the more skeptical gamers — to see how Konami can serve the hardcore *Contra* fanatics.



▲ The bosses are as massive and grotesque as ever, and they'll still kill you with just one hit.

NEO CONTRA

New school
Contra, old school
difficulty

Neo Contra pits two characters — the cigar-smoking badass (and *Contra* mainstay), Bill Rizer, and a katana-carrying, cybernetic samurai named Jaguar — against a nigh endless army of gun-toting baddies, malicious monstrosities, and rocket-wielding robots. Virtually all of the action takes place in

an isometric perspective with almost full 3D movement, which further heightens the already-frenetic atmosphere. After all, players aren't just aiming up and down, front and back anymore — enemies now assail you from every direction, and you'll have to do all that you can just to survive through each of the strenuous stages.

The game also offers more diverse gameplay options than just the usual running and gunning — like, say, riding on the back of a giant lizard while gunning. Of course, it's more analogous to riding on motorcycles in *Shattered Soldier* than riding on a camel's back in *Metal Slug*.

One of the complaints from the previous iteration was the selection of weapons — or lack thereof. *Neo Contra* continues the tri-weapon system from *Shattered Soldier*, but players can pick a set of three weapons



▲ Who needs a motorcycle when you can ride on a giant armored lizard?

— including a set with the old *Contra* standby, the Spread Gun — before the stage starts, and use them throughout the stage. There are two standard projectile weapons for use against the ground-based foes, and one lock-on weapon for the aerial adversaries. Both Bill and Jaguar can roll out of danger, but there is no vertical movement — unless they are blasting their way through the requisite wall-climbing sections — which makes the lock-on weapons all the more important.

All told, *Neo Contra* seems to be shaping up rather well. We're certainly excited by the decidedly different direction the series is taking, and we can't wait to play more. JUSTIN CHENG



▲ The game takes on a different perspective this time around, but it doesn't make the game much easier.

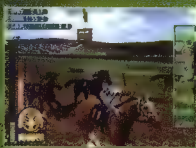
THE BUZZ
Neo Contra should be a pleasant surprise for this series' fans.

TOO BIG TO BE A JOCKEY?

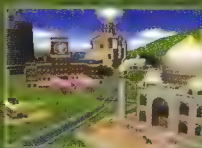
IN GALLOP RACER 2004, SIZE DOESN'T MATTER!

Gallop Racer 2004

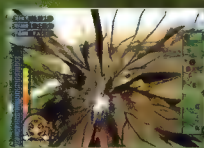
ROCK THE JOCK ON THE THOROUGHBREDS THAT YOU BUY AND TRAIN IN THE MOST REALISTIC HORSE RACING GAME EVER MADE! EXPERIENCE MORE TRACKS, MORE HORSES, MORE CONTROL, AND MORE GAMBLING IN THE HOTTEST SEASON MADE EVER.



Advanced horse racing



Earn gold and use it to customize your environment!



Ride the perfect race for the Big Revolution!

WORLD OF HURT

Throw salt on those wounds by picking up objects to use against your opponent. This chainsaw is a perfect example. Though it won't cause realistic damage, it will cause your buddy some damage that will make recovery difficult.



Trailer park chainsaw massacre!

While some wrestling games promote the ability to take the action outside of the ring, players rarely venture beyond the parking lot. In *Backyard Wrestling 2: There Goes the Neighborhood*, the action takes place in "your town," and the fighting breaks out all around the neighborhood.

Although *Backyard Wrestling* is considered an amateur sport, there is an expected colorful array of characters who fight using pro moves, including submission holds that you'd expect in a WWE licensed title. Don't like any of the diverse cast? Create your own male or female wrestler using the game's in-depth create-a-character mode.

Backyard 2 uses a new Environmental engine that allows players to react with the environment and even



► Expect WWE-caliber moves in your backyard.

BACKYARD WRESTLING 2: THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Take your ICP face paint online

the incidental onlookers. Be it at the zoo or in a trailer park, wrestlers can also utilize environmental objects — complete with damage modeling — from the office furniture the tussling just splintered, to cinder blocks and even a noisy, high-powered, blood-splattering chainsaw.

Most noteworthy about *Backyard*

2 is that it will be the first PS2 wrestling game on the shelf with online play. So, once you have earned your title and shamed your friends, you can expand your town to challenges all over the world and use a USB headset to shout out taunts and grunts to your opponents just as you would in your living room.



▲ Sure, there's hot girl-on-girl action, but keep your eyes on the prize and not the jiggle factor. Or not.

Even in its early stage, the foundation is already set for a solid wrestling game. The real work for the developers, though, still remains in the reactive environments; only portions of the office fight reacted to bodies being thrown on or through them, and in another fight, it was undecided if the trailers would break apart under force or just shake with impact. Still, as the old saying goes, if the trailer's a rockin', there's heads a'knockin'.

ENID BURNS



▲ Dude has disco fever after beating his opponent into submission.



▲ Some twisted players will come out to make worthy opponents.



▲ Is there a health code violation for wrestling in the kitchen?

THE BUZZ
The sequel to Eidos' *Backyard Wrestling* brings the action up a notch with online play.



◀ Sometimes tensions run high on the set of *Junkyard Wars*.

GAME INFO / SUB/DEV KONAMI / REL. DATE OCTOBER / TYPE ACTION / MAX PLAYERS FOUR / ESRB PENDING

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2

An improved take on the heroes in a halfshell



▲ The Turtles have a bevy of combos at their disposal, which gives the game more depth.

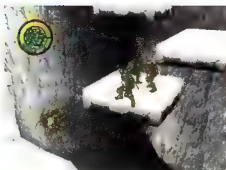
Fans who cried foul at the lack of *Turtle Power* in last year's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle* game should be pleased to know that

the sequel will indeed have four-player cooperative play. That alone would probably appease the hardcore *TMNT* contingent, but there are some other gameplay alterations that should make the game even more playable for the rest of the gaming community. Each member of the formidable foursome has his own distinct fighting style, so gamers will have to find the turtle that works best for them.

The version we played allowed you to swap characters on the fly when playing solo, making it much easier to determine which turtle we liked most; hopefully that feature will be implemented in the final version as well. The all-important combat is also more refined: each turtle has even more combos than before.

To sweeten the deal for the grizzled veterans, Konami promises that you can unlock the classic *TMNT* arcade games, which should make this sequel infinitely more replayable than its disappointing predecessor.

JUSTIN CHENG



▲ It's not all just nonstop action — there's a fair bit of platforming as well.



▲ Cooperation is the key to survival — and it makes the game even more fun!



THE BUZZ
Four-player action and arcade games make this the game *TMNT* fans are waiting for.

▼ All four turtles will finally be able to work together to take out the evil Foot Clan.



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▲ Watch as Busta Rhymes kicks this guy in the... face! Right?

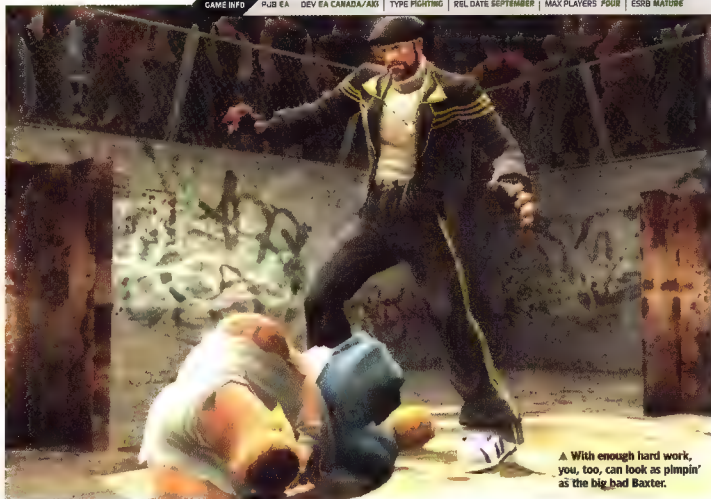


▲ "See that ketchup stain there? You're gonna pay for that!"

Def Jam: Fight for NY's online play may have gotten the axe, but there are more than enough offline modes to

keep players busy for quite a while. Heck, the create-a-character alone will probably soak up much of your precious time — the sheer amount of customization allows you to tweak your character until he becomes the ultimate exemplar of hip-hop style.

Right after D-Mob has been carted away by the police at the end of the previous game, an unidentified character busts him loose. Since you're a key witness, you are interrogated about D-Mob's new ally, thereby beginning the in-depth create-a-character mode. If you want to forgo the creation process right then and there, you can always just choose one



▲ With enough hard work, you, too, can look as pimpin' as the big bad Baxter.

DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY

Hands-on with the Create-A-Character

of the five ready-made characters, but the real fun is, of course, building your own brawler. As the interrogation with the police sketch artist continues, you determine your created character's basic appearance, be it his height and weight, or the shape of his eyes and ears. If that weren't enough, you can

even choose your character's voice, ranging from the guttural "gruff" to the rather amusing "clean cut." Clearly, the days of the strong, silent protagonist are long gone — expect some expletive-laden post-match trash talking in whichever vocal style you've chosen.



▲ Ludacris's punches are so strong, opponents recoil before he even strikes.



► Excuse me, but are those Bugle Boy jeans you're wearing?

This just scratches the create-a-character's surface, however. Once you've decided on your character's basic physical appearance, you're immediately thrown into the story mode, where you can choose a fighting style — kickboxing, street fighting, martial arts, wrestling, or submissions — and outfit your character to suit your personal preferences. Of course, you are initially limited to only a few sets of clothes, hairstyles, jewelry, and tattoos, but more become available in the various shops as you battle your way through the story mode.

But in order to get

the money necessary to purchase these accoutrements, you'll have to fight — it's in the title, after all — so you'd better hone your skills at Henry Rollins' gym. Enhance existing moves and attributes, or learn new, devastating finishing maneuvers — either way, you'll become quite the fashionable and furious fighter when all is said and done.

It didn't seem possible, but we're even more excited about *Def Jam: Fight for NY* than we were before. Though online play would certainly be a welcome addition, it is not a necessity when the single-player game is this deep. We can't wait to get our hands on the full retail version later this year. **JUSTIN CHENG**





▲ If two monsters use their beam weapons simultaneously, there's a color-coded mini-game to determine whose breath is more likely to knock 'em dead.

GODZILLA: SAVE THE EARTH

The King Of Monsters is back and madder than ever!

Some of us are still sore that Atari never brought its first *Godzilla* game to PS2 (okay, it's just Eric, but he's sore enough for all of us). However, this better-than-ever follow-up should make up for it.

Save the Earth features the same city-squashing monster brawling of the original, but with more of everything. Online play, bigger environments (still destructible), and a roster that has expanded to include playable leviathans Biollante, Mothra, Mogera, Space Godzilla, Baragon, and Megaguirus. The breath weapons have evolved now, too, and a sort of stone-paper-scissors tug-of-war minigame takes place any time two monsters' beams meet.

The biggest change, however, is an

expanded story mode in which Godzilla swims through the sea fighting Ebirah, and in which Mogera blasts *Skyfox*-style through an asteroid field, and then battles Space Godzilla in outer space. These and many other scenarios inspired directly by the movies should give both casual and hardcore fans more monster for their money.

ERIC BRATCHER



◀ It's online for two to four players, too, so you can find an opponent even if you're trapped in a secret dungeon in Alaska... with your PS2 and an internet connection.



▲ Baragon is shown here, giving the adult Mothra a bit of the old ultra-violence.



▲ The monsters fight using a wider range of styles and special abilities than they did in the first game.

"Without guys like me, you'd still be playing Pong."

—Mark Hartlieb

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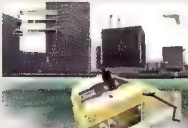
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CODES

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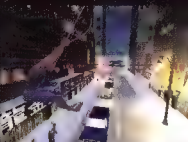


91 Van Helsing
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Catwoman, p. 87



Spider-Man 2, p. 91



A LaDarian Tomlinson earns those lightning bolts on his helmet — if you let him get to the outside, get ready to check out his end zone dance.

THE ULTIMATE NFL CHEAT SHEET, PART TWO

ESPN or Madden? It doesn't matter!

Last month, we whipped the NFC. Here's how to kick the AFC's ass.



BALTIMORE RAVENS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON LB Ray Lewis

You're not going to slip by him or shake his tackle, so just avoid Lewis altogether.

OFFENSE Keep things away from the linebackers. Ray Lewis and Co. control the middle of the field, so don't test their skills. Spread the ball wide in three and four WR sets and force the linebackers to cover speedy receivers where they'll struggle to keep pace rather than nail the big hit. Also, run out of the I formation and let your FB take the first shot at the LB instead of your running back.

DEFENSE The Ravens have one of the league's worst passing

offenses, but they do have a solid running game. Stack the line with defenders in the 43, blitz your safeties and force them to go to the air. Take Jamal Lewis out of the game early and you're set



BUFFALO BILLS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON WR Eric Moulds

If the Bill's prime passing target is on fire, Travis Henry will have an easy day, too.

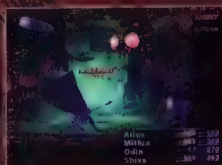
OFFENSE The Bills had the second best rated defense in the NFL last year, thanks to talented players in the secondary and solid LB's. In the passing game, try to keep the ball away from SS Milloy and CB Troy Vincent. In the running game, try to stuff it up the middle and watch out for LB's Takeo Spikes and London Fletcher. Use a FB when running outside in their direction.

DEFENSE Despite a rough offensive season in 2003, the Bills

The road to salvation and the path to hell are both paved in blood.
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— G4TechTV

"A deep and twisted post-apocalyptic RPG with stunning visuals and a mature story -- something quite unlike what we've seen before." — GameSpy

"...one of the more surprising overall games of 2003." — IGN.com



RATING PENDING

RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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真女神転生

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have key talent in the skill positions. Double team Eric Moulds to take away the top pass catching threat and focus on stopping Travis Henry and the running game.



CINCINNATI BENGALS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

WR Chad Johnson
He's got speed, skills and a strong number two WR in Peter Warrick. Cover them tight, but keep your eyes on the deep routes.

OFFENSE The Bengals struggled on defense last year and even though they improved during the offseason, they still lack talent — especially in the secondary. Run 3-WR sets to spread out their already thin secondary and throw the ball whenever you see a mismatch open up.

DEFENSE The Bengals are deceptively strong on offense. With speedy WRs Chad Johnson and Peter Warrick, the team is always a threat to go deep, so keep your safeties back. Also, run the 43 defense to stop the run — Rudi Johnson is toughest inside the tackles, so your extra lineman will help plug things up and string him outside.



CLEVELAND BROWNS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

QB Jeff Garcia
The Browns will rely on Garcia to make big plays. Stop him and you'll stop the Browns.

OFFENSE The Browns have a solid offensive line, so don't try to run much up the middle. Head to the outside with sweeps and pitches. Also watch for any one-on-one matchups between the CBs and your WR's. If you've got a good pass catcher, you've got a mismatch on your hands.

DEFENSE New Browns QB Jeff Garcia is an improvement for Cleveland, but he doesn't have much run support. Play back in Nickel and Dime defenses (keeping a close eye on Kellen Winslow) and dare the Browns to run on you with William Green.



DENVER BRONCOS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

CB Champ Bailey
The Bronco's new CB can blanket your best receiver... avoid throwing his way unless your WR is wide open.

OFFENSE The Broncos improved an already excellent defense with the addition of shutdown corner Champ Bailey and SS John Lynch. Because of this, you'll need to be extra careful in your passing game. Spread the field with short, West Coast offense style passing and quick runs to the outside. You can also switch your best WR to the second or third spot on the roster, Bailey will then take whoever's listed as the number one receiver.

DEFENSE Even though the Broncos will probably turn Quentin Griffin or Garrison Hearst into a thousand yard rusher, the games won't have them ranked very high. Focus on stopping the WR's with Nickel and Dime sets and don't be afraid to double cover Rod Smith from the middle now that TE Shannon Sharpe is no longer a threat in the middle.



HOUSTON TEXANS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

LB Jamie Sharper
Stay away from the middle of the Texans defense; Sharper could make the visit unpleasant.

OFFENSE The Texans were dismal on defense last year, but have made some improvements to their secondary in order to shore things up. Because of this, challenge the D-line and the outside LBs with runs off the tackle and to the outside. Spread the field with short passes and the occasional deep toss to the side opposite FS Marlon McCree.

DEFENSE The Texan's offense focuses on the trio of David Carr, Andre Johnson and Domanick Davis. First, focus your coverage on Johnson (double covering if you don't have a shutdown CB). Then, use your LB's to keep an eye on Davis. He's not especially speedy so run 43 defenses to plug the middle and string him to the outside.



INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

QB Peyton Manning
One of the best QB's in the game — you can only try to contain him.

OFFENSE Tony Dungy squeezed a lot from this defense last year, but the CBs are still not exceptionally talented. Run corner passing plays that send your WR's to the sideline away from the safeties. You'll often get free from the CBs for a short or

medium gain.

DEFENSE Manning and Harrison are your first concern. Double cover Harrison whenever possible or at least make sure that you have a safety watching this speedy and sure handed WR. Get in the face of Manning with blitzes to keep him from getting a good look at his target and always watch out for Edgerrin James as the short passing outlet.



JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

DT Marcus Stroud
If you do try to run against the Jags, steer far away from Stroud's side.

OFFENSE The Jags feature a stingy run defense, so your best bet is to take the air. Challenge the CB's directly with your best receivers. Use 3 and 4-WR sets to get favorable match-ups and spread the field with outside and inside routes. When you see a one-on-one showdown with a CB, you will likely have the advantage.

DEFENSE First you must stop Fred Taylor. He's fast, so run the 34 defense and use your outside LBs to force him back into the middle. In the passing game, focus your defense on WR Jimmy Smith. The talent drop-off after him is significant.

▼ The Jets weren't known for a punishing defense last year, but they can still drag you down if you don't target their weak spots.



KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

TE Tony Gonzalez
If you don't specifically plan to stop him with special coverage, he'll gain big yards all day long.

OFFENSE The Chiefs have one of the NFL's worst rushing defenses, so you need to be ready to run the ball early and often. Alternate running sweeps to the outside and blasts up the middle. Use playsets that feature a blocking back and follow him whenever possible to chew up yards and the clock.

DEFENSE The Chiefs' offense is loaded with weapons. The two you must concern yourself most with is HB Priest Holmes and TE Tony Gonzalez. Holmes is a power runner, so try to string him to the outside with 43 defensive sets. Try to match-up Gonzalez against a CB, he's more of a threat than most of the Chief's WR's.



MIAMI DOLPHINS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

RB Ricky Williams
This speedy and bruising runner can run by you or over you. Always attack with multiple defenders.

OFFENSE The Dolphins have a solid defense, especially against the run. Your best bet is to attack the secondary with your third or fourth WR or TE. Stay away





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GAMEFLY

TAKE THE PSM CHALLENGE!

RULES You can't send an entry for each challenge. If you cheat or use codes, you'll be disqualified. The final letter for the contest will be accepted on December 1st. If there are multiple winners, the final winner will be decided by the best paragraph that explains why you're the winner. Send a picture or a videotape (non-returnable) and a short paragraph explaining why you're the winner. Sorry, no e-mail entries! This contest is open only to readers living in the United States, age 18 years or older. PSM reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater monetary value, if necessary.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:

PSM October Challenge #
(the challenge you're entering)
c/o Future Network USA,
150 North Hill Drive, Ste. 40
Brisbane, CA 94005.

THE CHALLENGES

Challenge #1: Astro Boy

Find all of the hidden cards and then show us your completed collection.

Challenge #2: Spy Fiction

Complete the game and send us visual proof that you've done so.

Challenge #3: Viewtiful Joe

Complete both the main game and Dante's quest, then thank Capcom for making this wonderful game.

THIS MONTH'S PRIZE PACKAGE

NASCAR 2005:

Chase for the Cup
Gradius V
Hot Shots Golf FORE!



JUNE WINNERS

RE Outbreak

Tristan Moore, Santa Teresa, NM

NBA Ballers

M. Sean Henderson, Gary, IN

Final Fantasy XI

Nathaniel Sapp, Owensboro, KY



▲ Bill's Raiders look to have really upgraded on defense this year, adding guys who can take anybody down.

still have key talent in the skill positions. Double team Eric Moulds to take away the top pass catching threat and focus on stopping Travis Henry and the running game.



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

QB Tom Brady
He can dominate the short passing game, so force him to go long.

OFFENSE It's best to attack the New England Patriots with the passing game. Run plays that do two things — pull CB Ty Law and SS Rodney Harrison away from the play. Use 3 and 4-WR sets to pull this off, and you can even sub your third or fourth WR into the top slot as a decoy to keep these two guys busy.

DEFENSE Tom Brady is deadly accurate, but he doesn't have the strongest arm. Defend first against the short to medium passing game and don't overuse deep coverage unless your opponent is determined to go that way. Keep an eye on Corey Dillon as well; he's got good speed, so try to force him inside with your LB's in a 3-4 defensive set.



NEW YORK JETS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

QB Chad Pennington
He doesn't have the greatest arm strength, so focus on the short and medium passing game.

OFFENSE The Jets are weak against the run, so pound the ball up the middle and off the tackles as much as possible. The secondary is also questionable aside from CB Donnie Abraham. Look for favorable match-ups with the other CB's,

especially to the free safety side.

DEFENSE The Jets running game is suspect so force your opponent to go to the ground by playing from pass-stopping Nickel and Dime sets. Blitz from the outside rather than the inside, C Kevin Mawae is a force on the inside of the line and he'll bottle up your blitzers unless you avoid him.



OAKLAND RAIDERS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

DT Warren Sapp
Sapp's still got the ability to stop RB's and sack the QB; keep the running game outside to avoid him.

OFFENSE Last year, the Raiders were dead last against the run. This year, they reloaded with DTs Ted Washington and Warren Sapp anchoring the line, so your best bet is to run to the outside as much as possible. Beat them with sweeps out of one-back sets. Use speed to get around the corner and pick up quick yards. Look out for the Woodsons in the passing game.

DEFENSE The Raiders are weak at HB so play Nickel and Dime defensive sets. Against the passing game, make sure your safety keys off Jerry Porter to cover him downfield. Rice and Brown are still talented receivers, but they no longer have the speed to be constant deep threats.



PITTSBURGH STEELERS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

WR Hines Ward
With Plaxico Burress on the other side of the field it's hard to give full attention to Ward, but don't let him get open.

OFFENSE The Steelers have a young

secondary that doesn't have a single star play-stopper. Use your best WRs and TE in deep and medium routes and try to get separation for the long pass. In the running game, watch out for the LBs. Use a formation with a blocking FB to absorb the initial LB attack.

DEFENSE The Steelers key weakness is the running game. The Bus isn't what he used to be and if you can force him to run laterally by plugging the middle in a 4-3 defense, he should be easy to spot. Also, blitz the Steeler's QB as much as possible to keep him from getting a clear view of his far more talented WRs.



SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

RB LaDainian Tomlinson
If Lorenzo Neal's blocking for him, he's even more deadly. Try to keep him inside the tackles.

OFFENSE The Chargers don't have any standout stars at CB or S, so keep it to 2 or 3-WR sets and just be patient. Don't be afraid to go deep, the Bolt's pass rush shouldn't give you too much pressure.

DEFENSE The Chargers have a weak passing game. Their QB is low ranked, the WR squad below average and the offensive line is porous. Play 3-4 defenses to keep speedy HB Tomlinson from getting to the outside and blitz your linebackers and safeties instead to apply some serious QB pressure.



TENNESSEE TITANS

MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON

QB Steve McNair
After Mason, the Titan's WR's are weak, but McNair can beat you with his legs.

OFFENSE Last year, the Titans had the NFL's best rushing defense, so ground yards aren't going to come easy. Look to the blitz and steer clear of CB Samari Rolle. You will also be able to pick up short passing yards over the middle by sending your players against the Titans underpowered interior LB's.

DEFENSE McNair is your main concern, especially if you're playing against a scrambler. Double cover Derrick Mason and your other defenders should be able to handle the other WR's. Eddie George isn't what he used to be, so force him up the middle with 3-4 defensive sets.



GameShark Codes

Catwoman

[M] Must Be On
94D115A2 1B664022

PSM Exclusive Codes:

All Levels Unlocked
244FED96 CB8F1ED7

All Comic Extras Unlocked
244FED96 CB8F1EC7
244FED96 CB8F1EE7

Infinite Domination
24D453E8 46A5C4FC

Max Domination
24D451E8 46A5C44C

Max Points
24T1197E 9734DDCE

Max Diamonds
24511B7E 97B4DD7E

Crimson Tears

[M] Must Be On
948595F2 92BE9128
24DAF70A 1675C108
24D8B7AA 1A44C128
249133AA 10B6C344

Infinite HP
24813FAE 9C97857C
249137B8 1497C5CD

Low MT
24C1BEAC 9657C100
2450B628 1E7CC128
24DAF60A 1675C118
24D2B6AC 1A56C139
2491B0A8 32B6C580

Infinite Ammo
2498B4CC B296D76C
2490B4F4 BFBCD7CD

Infinite Item - Tool Use
24901168 1634C7E8

Max HP
248127AE 1DB6C4DF
24813DAE 9C97855D

View Status For Max LV
2441B4A8 1E74C11B
24D9B4AA 1E54C139

View Status For Max EXP
24C9B4A8 1656C108
24D9B4AE 1E56C129

View Status For Max AT
2441BCB8 9E74818B
24D9B4AC 1654C1A9

View Status For Max DF
2441BCB8 9E74818B
24D9B4AE 1654C1B9

Max Funds
2450A7AA 9266C18B
2450A79E 9A65COAB
24DAF70A 1675C198
24D0BF8E 9A46C1B9
24D131AC 90B6D354

Max Item - Weapon Slots
2441B5A8 1A64C10B
24DAF50A 1675C128
24D9B5A8 1A45C119
249110AE 10B6D5F4

Karaoke Revolution Volume 2

[M] Must Be On
94C4B6FC 1DFE500A

Character Always Has Glowing Effect

24D5A6A8 5276C009
24D5B6A0 4275C028
24D4B69A 074C8119
24C1BE2E 1E68032
24911568 12F64324

Way of the Samurai 2

[M] Must Be On
94C038F2 B76E565C
24C1BEB3 17748109
24D0B628 1674C128
24C9B6A8 1255C11A
24DAF60A 1675C138
24D0B628 1674C188
24D133E8 12F64770
2450B4AA 9274C10B
24D0B428 1674C128
24D0B4AA 1255811A
24D0B428 1674C138
24DAF40A 1675C188
2450B4A8 1274C1A9
249113EA 12F645F0
24D9B78A 1256C188
2451A7A8 167681A9
2453A7A8 16748199
2441BDB8 9E7481BB
24DAF40A 16F5C108
249134EC B036C314

Infinite Health
24C9B6A8 1255C189

Infinite Sword Durability
249093BA 9D7C57CD

Infinite Energy
24D0B4AA 12558139

Max Health
24C9B6A8 1655C12B

Max Sword Durability
2411B4E8 D6B4C75D
2481B4C8 5E97C75D

Max Energy
24D0B4AA 1255812B

Max Money
2450B7B2 9364810B
24C0BF2C 9F6E892A
24D0B788 9244811B
24D1B2EC 3036D774

All Moves
24D3BF8C 1656C1B9
24D3BD8C 9656C109
24D3BD8E 1656C129
24D3BD8E 9656C119
24D3BD88 1E56C139
24D3BD88 9E56C189
24D3BD8A 1E56C1A9
24D3BD8A 9E56C199

Max Attack
24C3B68E 16D6C109

Max Defense
24C3B68E 96D6C129

Max Quality
2441A6A8 1EF6C11B
2443A6A8 1EF4C13B
24C3B688 9ED6C189

Max Durability
2451B6A8 96F4C1A9
24C3B688 1ED6C199

Max Kills
2451B6B2 97F481BB
24D3B68A 16D6C129



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STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

Here's a quick taste of the multiplayer action!

ROUND ONE

Map: Bespin Platforms

Eric: Republic Clone Army

Justin: Republic Clone Army

Eric: Wow, this place is a meat grinder. It's all these floating platforms arranged in sort of an hourglass or dumbbell design. This creates a HUGE bottleneck right in the center of the map, which the NIS forces just keep choking up with Droidekas. Those things are a real pain once they get their shields up. Plus, the tight, narrow area makes up for their low mobility. I'm using the Jet Trooper and his EMP launcher almost exclusively.

Justin: In the meantime, the skies are full of dog-fighting aircraft. I'm getting all Snoopy and the Red Baron with my Jedi Starfighter. There's a Cloud Car on one of these platforms, too. Why don't you try lending me a hand?

Eric: Hey, great idea. Can I fit lots of soldiers into it

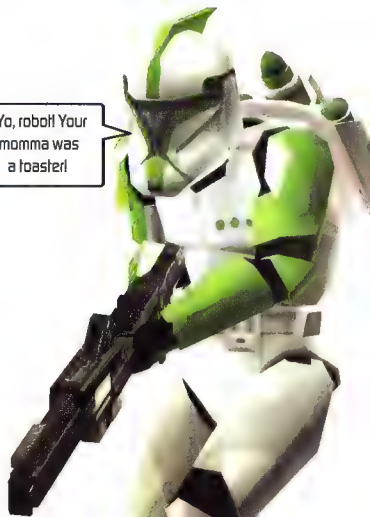
like they do at the circus, and maybe take out some of the enemy's less well-guarded Command Posts on the periphery in a surprise attack?

Justin: I said CLOUD car, not Clown car. Good strategy, though. Did you get the idea from the AI? While the fighting is clearly heavily focused near the center of the map, it keeps sending pilots to try to do an end-around and grab the two Control Points we have on the outside edges. But I'm like an ever-vigilant wall of plasmatic pain up here, so they're failing so far.

Eric: Cool. I seem to have a handle on things down here, too. Turns out, the sniper is a perfect counter for this bottleneck. I'm just hanging out to the rear of the mess, picking them off as they come down the alley. If you peg a Droideka just as it transforms from rolling mode into standing mode, it goes down fast. It's awesome.

Winner: Republic Clone Army

Yo, robot! Your
momma was
a toaster!





► The Rebel Vanguard unit carries an anti-vehicle Missile Launcher. However, AT-ATs are so big and durable, it just isn't practical to try to bring them down that way.

Eric: What are you talking about? Carnels at Chili's? I'm confused.

Justin: Never mind. Troglydote.

Eric: Anyhow, if you can pull off that front seat/back seat jumping thing, you're a stud. That's a tough maneuver, and piloting any of these craft takes a bit of practice. Well, except for the Tauntaun. It is fun to ride those loveable, if smelly, critters?

Justin: Yeah. It's tough being a Rebel on this map, but the Tauntauns ease the pain a little. I've seen the Empire lose this map if the Rebels really mobilize offensively and communicate well... and kill the AT-ATs, of course. But it doesn't look like that's going to happen today.

Eric: No, it doesn't. Hey, is now a good time to tell you that the planetary bonus I used this round was Sabotage, so that all your vehicles spawned with less health?

Justin: I wish I'd had that bonus. It would really even this map out if the AT-ATs and AT-STs were more fragile.

Winner: Galactic Empire

ROUND TWO

Map: Battle of Hoth

Eric: Galactic Empire

Justin: Rebel Alliance

Justin: Oh, this looks fair.

Eric: What? It's not like I'm walking around in a friggin' AT-AT, a high-indestructible engine of destruction, laying waste to everything in my path.

Justin: Yes, it is.

Eric: Whatever. Now, where's that Shield Generator?

Justin: Hmmm. You're supposed to have two people in a speeder, but I can fly by, jump into the back seat to fire the tow cable, and then jump back into the front to fly some circles around your wimpy little ankles and take you down. Just like a big, metal, camel-looking Achilles, you're heels are your soft spot.



◀ Naboo is home to the Kaadu, a sort of hairless, more pathetic Tauntaun. They're fun to ride... and to shoot.



▲ Our favorite unit? It's a close call, but we'll go with the Dark Trooper, whose jet pack and blast cannon provide maneuverability and point-blank firepower.

ROUND THREE

Map: Cloud City, Bespin

Eric: Galactic Empire

Justin: Rebel Alliance

Eric: Hey, this is different. It's all close quarters and stuff, and there seem to be no vehicles at all. It's also confusing — I can hear gunfire, but I don't see anyone. Where the heck is everyone?

Justin: Above you. Blast!

Eric: Ow! Man, this is some elaborate, seriously multi-layered architecture. Courtyards, risen walkways, towers... this level is a sniper's dream ...

Justin: Sure is. Blast!

Eric: Ow again. Okay, I'm spawning somewhere away from your courtyard of death now. Where are you, anyway? You're not showing up on my radar.

Justin: That's because my bonus this round is the ability to jam your radar, so you can't see my units.

Eric: Sneaky. However, I'm doing a little better now. The basic troopers have a surprisingly cool automatic rifle, but I'm loving these Dark Troopers, with their jet packs and shotguns. If they were actually in the movies, they would have kicked Luke's whiny, oddly Richie Cunningham-like ass.

Justin: Think so, huh? Why don't you see for yourself? (Luke Skywalker appears onscreen). He's the AI-controlled bonus character for the Rebellion, and he prefers to be compared to Brad Pitt, not Ron Howard.

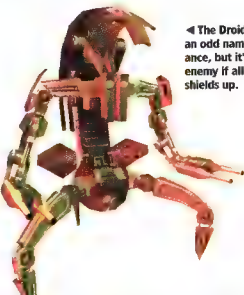
Eric: Whoa. He just gutted me like a fish. I couldn't shoot him. He deflected all my blaster fire. Luckily,

my bonus this level is extra reserves.

Justin: They won't help you. I just figured out how to use the sniper's recon droid to call for an orbital strike. Die, Imperial oppressor! Blast-o-matic!

Eric: Ow! Ow! Ow! The only good thing that happened there was that we were fighting on a suspended walkway and the blast actually blew Luke over the railing, so he couldn't dance on my corpse.

Winner: Rebel Alliance



◀ The Droideka may have an odd name and appearance, but it's a devastating enemy if allowed to get its shields up.

UNIT ROUNDUP!

Which player character is right for you?

It's tough to choose a favorite unit, and in fact, there are many times when you'll want to choose a specific unit to accomplish a specific task. However, we CAN offer some pointers. There are four basic units that run through every force, and a few unique units. Here they are.

Grunts

Republic Clone Trooper, Super Battle Droid, Rebel Soldier, Stormtrooper

Best exemplified by the basic, garden variety stormtrooper, the grunt is a very typical, no-frills unit. They usually carry adequate grenades and some form of rapid-fire machine rifle, as well as the fall-back pistol.

These fellows may be simple, but they're still very effective as all-rounders, and a good unit to begin with if you're not sure how you want to play a level. They don't have the glaring weaknesses of the other classes, and don't underestimate their Blaster Rifles — a speedy rate of fire tends to make this a surprisingly effective weapon.

Heavy Weapons

ARC Trooper, Anti-Armor Droid, Rebel Vanguard, Shock Trooper

These soldiers may carry pistols for *mano a mano* conflicts, but they're focused on taking down much larger prey with their missile launchers and mines. In the proper hands, they can take out smaller vehicles and AT-STs with ease, though they still have trouble with large targets like AT-ATs.

Pilots

Republic Clone Pilot, Pilot Droid, Rebel Pilot, Imperial Pilot

Pilots may be the most specialized class in the game. Their weaponry tends to be mundane, just a simple pistol and some sort of mortar or grenade launcher (though the noble forces win out here: the Rebel Pilot has a great blaster cannon) and the Clone Pilot wields a cool plasma cannon). Plus, they usually sacrifice their grenades for the ability to drop health or ammo for fellow combatants. This proves less helpful than one would imagine, because there are so many one-hit weapons that health replenishment isn't as critical as it could be.

What the pilot excels at, of course, is using vehicles. All classes can use vehicles, but pilots actually heal their vehicles as they go. Plus, all pilots carry fusion-cutters, which can repair vehicles as well as construct things like turrets in the battlefield.

Snipers

Clone Sharpshooter, Assassin Droid, Rebel Marksman, Scout Trooper

Death from afar is the focus of these patient killers, who all wield long-range sniper rifles in addition to the basic pistol. In addition, they all carry Thermal Detonators and can call upon portable Recon Droids, which can not only provide a remote view of the action, but also have the ability to call down an orbital strike to clear out multiple enemies.



◀ We knew the garden variety Imperial Stormtrooper was fun to mow down by the dozens, but who knew he rocked as a player character, too?

Unique units

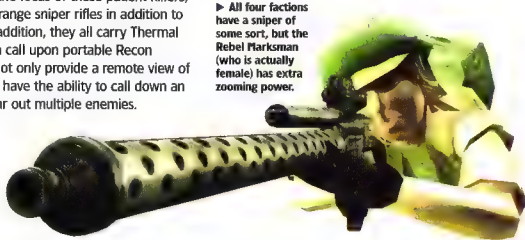
Republic Jet Trooper

On maps where mobility is of the essence, there are few units capable of competing with these high-flying death dealers, whose jet packs give them the ability to cover long distances with ease. They wield slightly more powerful pistols and EM Pulse Launchers, a sort of anti-droid EMP rocket, which wreak havoc on the circuitry of mechanized enemies.

Separatist Droideka

This evil machine has two modes. In wheel mode, it can traverse the battlefield quite swiftly, but has no offensive abilities. This changes when it unwraps into walking mode, when the unit takes on a crab-like form, raises an energy shield, and opens fire with twin blasters. Even when the shields are depleted, Droidekas can take plenty of punishment. Their only weakness is a pronounced lack of mobility and speed when in walking form.

▶ All four factions have a sniper of some sort, but the Rebel Marksman (who is actually female) has extra zooming power.



Rebel Smuggler

Also known as "Hey! Is that Chewbacca?", the Rebel Smuggler is one of the most durable units on the battlefield. You'll have to be careful to get the most from their offensive capabilities, though.

Their grenade launchers are nice, and the bowcaster can cut a wide swath, but it isn't terribly powerful, and only a very foolish unit would stick around and wait for the Time Bomb's ten-second fuse to count down.

Imperial Dark Trooper

Like the Republic Jet Trooper, the Dark Trooper uses a back-mounted jet pack to maximize battlefield maneuverability. However, because their prey tends to be organic rather than mechanic, their main weapon is a brutal, shotgun-like blast cannon, devastating at close range.

▶ The Wookie Smuggler doesn't pack a great deal of offensive firepower, but he's very durable, and a good option for players who tend to be bullet sponges.



▼ Remember kids, when fighting in the woods, always wear your protective bright orange jumpsuit so friends can see you a mile away... and pray the enemy is near-sighted.



E-mail: psm@futurenetworkusa.com

▲ Unless you've been living in a cave — without power, a TV, and a PS2 — you know that crime's at the heart of *GTA*.

92 PSM: 100% INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE #89 OCTOBER 2004 www.psmonline.com

DOWNTIME

Hey, only 99% of our time is spent on playing games! We do other stuff, too!



▲ We're still not sure what's scarier: Justin talking to himself, or listening to Ricky Martin.



▲ Randy says: "Snake meat helped me become the psychologically sound individual I am today."



▲ There's a 50-page feature on golf games to design. Who will lay it out? The loser.



▲ Chris may be ahead of the game where PS2 is concerned, but as for other technology, well...

DIY

I was playing *TimeSplitters 2* the other day and decided to try out the mapmaker feature. Three days later, I still haven't made a level that I can say is as good as the ones in the game, but being able to actually go through the level and think, "Hey, I remember this part" was one of the best experiences I have ever had. Why aren't there more games that let you create your own game or level? Gamers complain about companies producing the same games just with different paint jobs, so why not let the gamers try to make a better game? Right now, there aren't very many games that give you that freedom of doing it yourself! And the few there are eventually get old. Am I only one that sees this?

Scope, scopeman13@speakeasy.net

KAISER You've got realize that not every game lends itself toward user-created maps. A game like *TimeSplitters*, for example, is perfect for it because, well, it's a FPS with a great deathmatch mode. And the developers more than likely created the game knowing that they wanted to include the map-making feature. Who would you really want to make your levels in, say, *Prince of Persia*? Okay, maybe you would, but it would be a much more complicated affair to create a well designed level. Throw in the fact that the level would have no story context, and you can begin to get an idea of why some games don't have this type of option.

There are a ton of other factors to consider, too. From technology to space issues to the simple idea that a level maker just wouldn't be fun for a particular game, there's no one answer to your question. Let's hope the PS2 version of *Far Cry* includes the Sandbox level editor found in the PC version — it's incredible.

Handheld Hiss

I'm having some trouble visualizing Sony's plans for music and movies on the PSP. Given the choice between purchasing either music or a movie on a CD/DVD format (having numerous compatible devices, portable and stationary

alike) and a UMD (working only for the PSP), I would find it hard to choose the UMD. Similarly, it would seem silly to repurchase your favorite album or film just to have it on a PSP. How does Sony plan to get around this? It seems the much more logical approach (to music, at least) would be to play MP3's from the memory stick device. Please tell me this is a feature that Sony plans to include

Ben Duellente, foxhound199@hotmail.com

RANDY There's already been talk out of Sony that the PSP will work with its Connect online music store for downloading songs onto a Memory Stick Duo. So, you're in luck in that respect. The jury's still out on the viability of music and movie UMDs, however. If you read our "7 Years of PSM" feature last issue, you'd have seen our prediction that non-game UMDs won't be around in seven years. Certain? No. But realistic? Definitely. I've heard rumors of UMD-only movie releases (*Final Fantasy: Advent Children* being one) and DVD/UMD combo packs (*Spider-Man 2*) but it's definitely going to be an uphill battle getting studios and recording labels other than Sony's onboard.

Down On The Farm

I am writing this letter to recognize Randy's quote in PSM's 87 issue, August 2004. He stated, "I'd love to see some survey data of a large number of PS2 owners to get a real percentage of how many 'systems gone bad' there are out there." Well, why not? Each month PSM takes a PlayStation Poll — why not have a questionnaire about the PS2's gone bad? This way, Randy could see how many readers PlayStation's have broken down "Bad eggs" maybe... "Bad farm", probably.

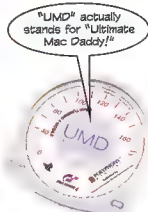
Cory Brox, mashswordsmn63cb@hotmail.com

RANDY Okay folks, get yourselves over to www.psonline.com and take the poll I've put up there about malfunctioning PS2s. I'll run the poll results in next issue's news section.

GAMES WE WANT TO SEE

DANCE DANCE EVOLUTION

Put Darwin's famous theory to the test! *DDE's* dance moves become so difficult over the course of the game that you body will be forced to naturally adapt or lose. By stage three, you'll have grown an extra leg. Stage six? At least two more arms. Not to mention the incredible reflexes and stamina that will emerge by the time you get to the final dance challenge. After that, you'll sprout entirely new appendages intended for use in sequels and other titles, including 10 extra fingers for *Keyboard Mania Extreme Double+*.



▲ We've got a hunch movies and music on UMD aren't exactly going to fly off shelves. Just a hunch.

TalkBACK

EACH MONTH we post a new question on our website at psonline.com and print the best answers here in our Letters section. Give PSM a piece of your mind!

This Month's Question: "How would you make survival horror games even scarier than they are?"

Just have Michael Jackson randomly chasing a little kid on the screen... that would freak me out...

Travis Whitehead, Elliott MD

Veer away from the fact that EVERYTHING has to be a zombie. Use real people with real killing problems.

Jason Marshall, Placentia, CA

More haunted houses, more traps, more ghosts, zombies, etc.

Aaron Rupp, Huron, OH

I think to make survival horror game scarier, they should give you less of a choice to kill the bad asses, so it seems like you have to survive with what you got!

Zak Gauli, Coronado, CA

Raise their prices and have Disney characters make cameos in them (evil laugh).

Gilbert Gomez, Tustin, CA

I would ship my game with a special device that shocks the player in an exciting moment... literally, sort of like an electric dog collar, but for entertainment purposes.

Scott Miller, Ithica, NY

HARDCORE

Pathetic Is The Word...

I've really enjoyed your *MGS3* coverage, that is, until I got to see the actual game playing. What a joke! Since when can you just change outfits on the fly? Does Snake have a utility belt now? Does he keep his face paint in a purse? Sam Fisher he ain't! Then there's a part where an enemy sees your stupid GATOR hat and runs away screaming like a little girl! How PATHETIC is that! Why wouldn't the guy just put a cap in its ass with his GUN? DUH! I thought these guys were supposed to be mercenaries! Has this third installment actually been released as a force to the series? What is Konami thinking? This is supposed to be Solid Snake — not Austin Powers, for crying out loud! I'm VERY disappointed!

Dan Melochie,

er955@freenet.carleton.ca

RANDY Dan, I hate to break this to you, but... it's a videogame.

Where's the retro love?

Back in your February 2003 issue, you had an article about classic Sega games being remade for the PS2 in Japan; games like *Phantasy Star* and *Streets of Rage*. Is there any news on those titles possibly coming over here? And why don't more companies release collections of older games (like Capcom is doing with *Mega Man* and Sega did with its *Sonic* collection)?

Brian Conway, SquidcraxX@aol.com

ERIC Unfortunately, I wouldn't look for the *Sega Ages* stuff in U.S. stores anytime soon, Brian. Even if they got through Sony's product approval process (which is unlikely, given the "low-tech remake" style of the games), the \$20 price point might still be too much for many gamers. U.S. players just aren't as nostalgic, by and large, as the Japanese, and both publishers and retailers know it. As for the release of compilations like the ones you've mentioned, I love

ASK THE 800-LB. GORILLA

...And stop ringing the damn doorbell and running away!!!

I need an adult answer from an adult person. This old guy down the street from me doesn't let me do anything! I walk down the street, he says "GET OFF MY STREET!!!" This makes me mad cause I can't do anything — can't go outside, can't look at his house, can't do nothing! Well, I kinda think it has to do with me and my friend lighting a bottle rocket by his house, but anyway what should I do about him?

Josh Tonelli, pmiguy08@yahoo.com

BILL Gee, Josh, before I can give you your much-needed adult answer, I need to know a few more things about this "old guy"

First of all, does this "old guy" live in a white house with green trim? Does he drive a Toyota pickup? Does he often wear really clever shirts with slogans

on them like "Don't Annoy The Crazy Person"? Does he have that really annoying "old guy" habit of always cranking up obnoxious punk rock on his "old guy" stereo and singing along? Does this "old guy" sometimes stagger around in the street wearing a monkey suit while waving a beer bottle? Well... does he? IS THAT WHAT THE "OLD GUY" DOES?!!?

I just need a bit more information before I can give you that adult answer, Josh. Tell me, just whereabouts do you live? What's your friend's name and where in the hell are you getting those damn bottle rockets? Speak up, Josh! DO YOU FEEL LUCKY, PUNKY?!!?

Have a question that requires a thoughtful, adult answer? Send an e-mail to bdonohue@futurenetworkusa.com with "800-LB. Gorilla" in the Subject Line.

them and can't think why we wouldn't see more of those over the next couple years. They're fairly cheap to make, and as long as there are a good number of games in them, they could overcome those limitations I mentioned. Are you listening, Sega? How about a *Sega Ages* compilation?

Graphic Goodness

I have a few questions involving the graphical power of the PS2. Recently I've seen a lot of things in your magazine saying things along the lines of "the PC and Xbox versions may have better graphics but..." The better looking PC version is forgivable, due to the smaller screen and thus sharper graphics, but an Xbox? PS2 and Xbox are capable of the same things graphically, correct? Is it because the developers don't know how to use the power of the PS2? Do they not push themselves hard enough because of the large PS2 user base? Or does the Xbox actually have more power?

Also, I noticed in your November 2003 issue, you mentioned a device called the Phantom, which may download games via a broadband connection. You said that the PS3 may also have this feature. This makes me wonder... why would Sony alienate thousands of potential customers?

Sal Smith, Goldarrowwood@aol.com

KAISER The honest truth is that Xbox has a number of features that make it easier for developers to create better-looking games. It has more RAM than PS2, full screen anti-aliasing, and a fast processor. Plus, developing games for it isn't too different from making PC games, which makes helps developers. The PS2 can do some heavy processing of its own, but not everyone is clever enough to use it to its potential.

That said, each console's games tend to have a "look". Some people like the Xbox look better, and some people prefer the look of PS2 games. When you consider the fact that art direction plays a major role in how good a game looks, the argument becomes even more moot. Case in point: I think *Riddick* on the Xbox looks just as impressive as, say, *ico* on the PS2. The point to walk away with is that the consoles are separate but equal... more or less.

As for the Phantom, do you mean that Sony would alienate customers who don't have broadband access? If the PS3 were to have such a feature, I seriously doubt it would be the console's only method of receiving games. Expect the DVD format to prevail, even into the next generation.

Things We'd Do To Improve Our Favorite Games

Final Fantasy

Add an "Andragynous Main Character" on/off toggle to the options menu

Jack and Daxter

A "slap Daxter" button

Gran Turismo

The Oscar Mayer Weinermobile, super-accurately recreated in every respect and fully tunable (more mustard, less ketchup...)

Mortal Kombat

Monkey knife fights

Ratchet & Clank

The addition of a Love Gun (to be used in conjunction with the Sheepinator)

Metal Gear Solid

Include Kojima's home phone number (so he can explain what the hell's going on in the story)

Grand Theft Auto

One word: Mechs

By making a good one... that would shock, and amaze me for sure.

Eric Funk, Philadelphia, PA

Vincent Price. Just... Vincent Price. Didn't think the next big idea in survival horror would come today, huh? So... when can I expect my check?

Skylar Flores, San Antonio, TX

Put in an EyeToy feature that allows people to make their own monsters.

Brandon Parrish, Durham, NC

Add more factors into the game, such as fatigue, so it becomes harder to protect yourself. Also hunger, thirst, and make sure there is no safe place to hide in the game.

Spencer Tobin, Wilder, VT

A zombie Bill Donohue... now that would be some scary stuff.

Rob Howitt, North Tonawanda, NY

Make the TV screen suddenly flicker and have the controls randomly not respond for a few seconds, while horrible screams are playing in the background.

Justin Piché, Ottawa, ON

I'd make it so you could only play at night and once you started, the game wouldn't let you turn off the power.

Ben Plummer, Wakefield, RI

Have evil Barbie as a playable character and buff her up so she could kick alien ass. Rock on, my fellow gamers, rock on!

Nathan Culver, Sullivan, MD

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AND THE WINNER IS...

NATHAN PINDELL of Wheatland, WY is the winner of our June Caption Contest. Nathan, your PSM Prize Pack is on the way!



▲ **Tragically, Grand Theft Auto: Animal Crossing was a total failure.**

3 YEARS AGO IN PSM...

October 2001 • Issue #50
We Can Count To Fifty!

Our October, 2001 issue of PSM was billed as a "50th Issue Spectacular"... and why not?

We had an exclusive playtest of *SSX Tricky*, where we revealed every secret the game had to offer.

We also had a hands-on story about *Final Fantasy X*, which fea-

tured 35 PSM-exclusive screen shots, as well as a first look at *Final Fantasy Online*.

And if that wasn't enough (and who's to say that was?), we also had a new look at *Tony Hawk 3*, as well as our listing of the fifty best PlayStation games!

Yeah, the October, 2001 issue was hot. Of course, now we're only 11 issues away from hitting the 100 mark! Stay tuned!



▲ **With such an SSX-y image as this on our cover, no wonder our October, 2001 issue was such a hot item!**

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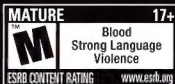
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